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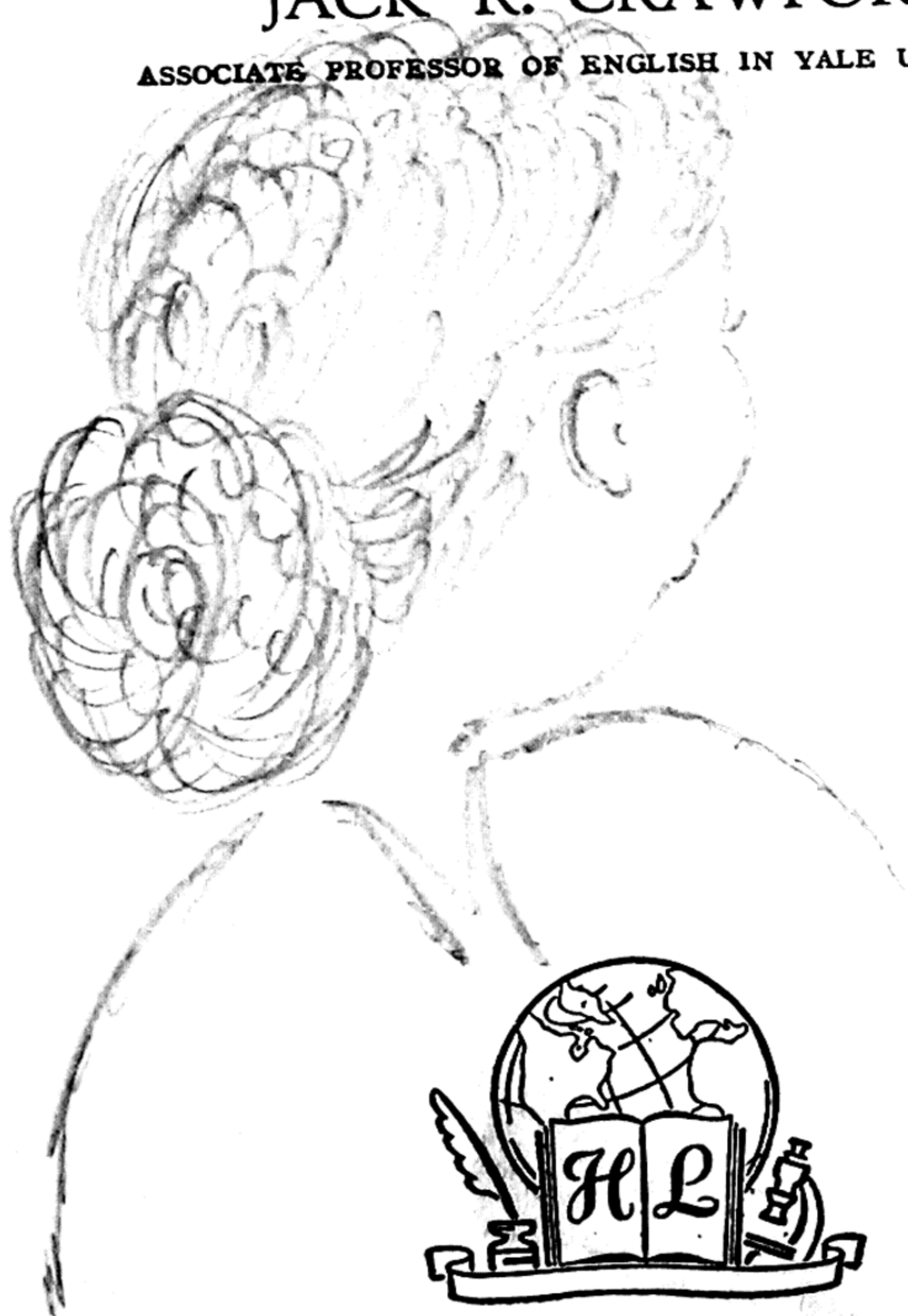
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# WHAT TO READ IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

JACK R. CRAWFORD

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN YALE UNIVERSITY



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## FOREWORD

The purpose of this outline is to present to the general reader, who is assumed to be a person desirous of securing, or already possessing, the background of an average, well-educated, civilized being of the twentieth century, first, a list of the foremost books in literature and science by those authors who time and critics combined are agreed have contributed in some way to modern thought. The contribution may consist of a perfect sonnet or of a complete system of philosophy, of a novel of the London slums or of a theory of evolution, of a tragedy in blank verse or the principles of economics, of a clever epigram or the law of gravitation, it matters not provided the work, little or great, short or long, is part either of the rubble or one of the highest ornaments of the edifice we call, complacently enough, the modern world.

Further, this book suggests the obvious avenues of approach, through a list of biographies, letters, and criticism, to the further general study of any author who may happen to hit the fancy or arouse the interest of the aforesaid reader. Following each entry, for example, will be found a list of commentators, chosen usually from among those most qualified to pass a comment upon the author in question. The object here has been to avoid pedantry and to keep the selections within the bounds of the general reader's patience and the possible capacity of a respectable public library. A ticklish problem this, for the gaps in public libraries are sometimes beyond the prophetic powers of a Sybil to estimate; nevertheless, by confining the supplementary list to

those who speak with authority, the compiler has striven to do his duty.

At this point, the compiler feels obliged to enter a modest disclaimer. It would seem from the two preceding paragraphs, that, like Francis Bacon, he is professing to take all knowledge for his province. No one could be more aware than he is of the impossibility of infallibility in a task such as the compilation of this book. Personal taste is a variable factor, to say nothing of the dark pall of ignorance which has probably veiled from his omniscience more titles than he has here included. Be it therefore understood that he does not hope to offer either a list of the "best books," a task of supererogation, as the poet Southey would say, or the catalogue of a gentleman's library, or anything, indeed, so dogmatic as is implied by such phrases as "the classics of eternity," "what the well-informed man should know," or similar popular labels for miscellaneous assortments of book-titles. Nor is he suggesting that, at the expense of only a few moments a day, the tired business man will be able to hold an auction-bridge party spellbound by quotations from Shelley and Epictetus. It takes time to read, and this book, in part composed of personal choices, as all honest efforts of this kind should be, is intended for the man who purposes to take some time out of his life for reading: that he may read to the best advantage has been the idea behind this book. It follows, naturally, that while the personal element in the selection of the list is unavoidable, and that ignorance may result in gaps, the compiler, humbly confronting this terrifying task, has leant upon a strong arm for his support. The framework of this book has been made possible by *The Cambridge History of English Literature*. To this work, and to the authorities who have written its chapters and prepared its bibliographies, he has turned in every paragraph for suggestion, quotation, advice, and information.

Such authority as this list may possess will be owing to the

*Cambridge History*. Its errors of omission and commission in rejecting and choosing titles will be owing only to the compiler.

JACK R. CRAWFORD,  
*Associate Professor of English.*

Yale University.

it has been the aim throughout to make the suggestions include readable and authoritative works, as far as the suggestions go, books which, at least, will not misinform or mislead the reader in his search for some of the best that has been said or thought in this world.

A final word should be added. The scope of this book, following the example of *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, does not include the creative work of living writers. The record in literature, for example, is closed with the novels and poems of Thomas Hardy. Such living writers as may be represented, are critics and historians, biographers and commentators. The reason for this decision does not rest upon the assumption that contemporary literature is negligible, but for a more practical reason. The line had somewhere to be drawn to keep the bulk of the book within a reasonable compass; the death of Thomas Hardy, bringing to an end at last the nineteenth century, seemed a fitting place to pause.



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The general authority on which this book is based.
- \*\*\* *The Dictionary of National Biography*.  
For brief lives of authors and men prominent in all fields. Excellent bibliographies of selected books under each entry.
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For general facts, dates, and brief lists of books.
- \*\*\* *Chronological Outlines of English Literature*: F. Ryland, rev. ed., 1896.  
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#### POETRY.

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- English Lyrical Poetry, from its Origins to the Present Time*: E. B. Reed. 1912.
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- \*\*\* *The Golden Treasury*: F. T. Palgrave. 1st series, Shakespeare to Wordsworth; 2nd series, the Victorian poets. New ed., 1900-1903. With additions, 1924.
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## HISTORY.

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- \*\*\* *Social England*: H. D. Traill. 6 vols.  
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## “Beowulf” and old English Poetry

Cambridge History English Literature, vol. I, chap. III.

The earliest extant and most important specimen of Old English (Anglo-Saxon) literature is the epic poem *Beowulf*, the only manuscript of which, dating from the tenth century, is now in the British Museum. It is a poem of a little over three thousand lines and the events it relates have to do with the Continental home of the Saxon people along the coast of Jutland. In its origin, therefore, it antedates the time of the Saxon invasion of England; indeed, its original form probably took shape in pre-Christian times when the Saxons were pagans and believed in Thor and Odin,<sup>1</sup> although in the version that we have certain passages show Christian influence. There are no references in the poem to the old pre-Christian mythology, yet the customs and ceremonies described, notably Beowulf's funeral, for example, are pagan. The original poem, therefore, seems to have become modified by a Christian writer, or minstrels, after the epic had arrived in England.

It is probably not necessary to remind the reader that this epic must be read in translation by all who are unacquainted with Old English. The best prose version is that by \*\*\* C. B. Tinker, new edition. Another translation by William Morris and A. J. Wyatt: *The Tale of Beowulf*, 1898, may be recommended.

Other translated selections from Old English poems are in A. S. Cook and C. B. Tinker's *Select Translations from Old English Poetry*, 1902. Further specimens are in R. K. Gordon's *Anglo-*

<sup>1</sup> See Carlyle: *Heroes and Hero Worship, The Hero as Divinity*.

## 6 What to Read in English Literature

*Saxon Poetry*, Everyman's Library. S. A. Brook's *Early English Literature* (1892) contains translations of extracts from *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*, and other old English poetry.

Translations of old Scandinavian epics akin to the type of *Beowulf*: \* *Grettir Saga*: William Morris and E. Magnusson, 1869; \* *Volsunga Saga*: William Morris and E. Magnusson, 1876. *Grettir Saga* is in Everyman's Library. See also *Translations from the Icelandic*, selected by W. C. Green, 1924.

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*The History of the Anglo-Saxons*: S. Turner.

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*English Literature before Chaucer*: P. G. Thomas. 1924.

### Old English Christian Poetry

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. I, chap. IV.

### CAEDMON (fl. c. 670)

The poetry of Caedmon composed in the monastery at Whitby in Yorkshire were paraphrases of the *Old Testament* narratives in lyric form. The portions that have come down to us include parts of *Genesis*, of *Exodus*, and of *Daniel*. According to the venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History*, the original extent of Caedmon's hymns included a greater portion of the biblical story.<sup>1</sup> As the example of Caedmon gave rise to a considerable school of religious poetry and biblical paraphrase, it is no longer possible to be certain which of these works that have come down to us are by Caedmon, if any of them are.

For specimens of Caedmon see S. A. Brooke's *Early English Literature*, 1892, and C. W. Kennedy, *The Poems of Caedmon*.

<sup>1</sup> See book IV, chap. VI, transl. by Miller.



CYNEWULF (fl. c. 750) (wrote toward the latter part of the eighth century).

Nothing is certainly known of the facts of Cynewulf's life. Some of his poetry is identified by his signature in runes; other works have been attributed to him with more or less certainty. Some of the identifiable poetry reveals him as a greater poet than any of the other old English writers with the exception of the author of the extant version of *Beowulf*.

*Crist* is a poem in three parts, of which the second part only has Cynewulf's signature in runes. As the three parts are different in treatment and style, the assumption has been made that Cynewulf is responsible only for part two which deals with the ascension of Christ. Part one contains the advent of Christ on earth and the third, his second coming to judge the world. Positive evidence is lacking, however, to determine the problem of separate authorship.

*Juliana* is the second of the poems signed by Cynewulf in runes. It is reserved in a manuscript in the library of Exeter Cathedral known as the *Exeter Book*, which also contains *Crist*. The subject is the martyrdom of Saint Juliana who is supposed to have lived about the time of the emperor Maximilian (A.D. 286-305).

*Andreas* is attributed by some critics to Cynewulf because this poem precedes in a surviving manuscript<sup>1</sup> a fragment entitled *The Fates of the Apostles* (*Fata Apostolorum*) which has his runic signature. The subject deals with St. Andrew's rescue of St. Matthew who is a prisoner among the African Mermedonians. By a miracle St. Andrew converts the heathens. The literary merit of the poem is found in the excellent descriptions of the sea, particularly in the account of the struggle with the tempest.

\*\*\* *Elene*<sup>2</sup> is regarded by modern critics as Cynewulf's

<sup>1</sup> *Vercelli Book*.

<sup>2</sup> Contains his runic signature.

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masterpiece. The story is that of the search for the true cross and its discovery by Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine (A.D. 272-337). The legend goes that the emperor ordered this search because one night before a decisive battle he beheld in the sky a brilliant cross with the inscription "By this conquer" ('Εν τούτῳ νίχα: *in hoc signo vinces*). The importance of the legend is that it marks the beginning of the adoration of the cross. The poem is one of singular beauty in its imaginative and descriptive passages, being full of colour and life.

*The Dream of the Rood* is likewise attributed by scholars to Cynewulf, although the evidence is wholly derived from style and treatment. The poem is the most beautiful of all expressions of religious feeling in Old English poetry, deep and profound in its analysis of sin and sorrow. It is also the first example that has survived of an English dream-poem.

*The Phoenix* is another poem attributed to Cynewulf on critical grounds. It tells in the first part the familiar legend of the phoenix and toward the end applies the legend as an allegorical interpretation of the death and resurrection of Christ. The poem is distinguished from other Old English poetry in its descriptions and love for nature, notably in its portrayal of the ideal landscape of the land where the phoenix dwells.

*The Exeter Book* contains a series of *Riddles* which were at one time believed to be by Cynewulf, but this attribution is now known to be groundless. In any event, however, these riddles (there are 95 in all) are interesting for their descriptions of the English countryside and for the fact that their materials are themes taken from folk-songs and legends.

Translations of Cynewulf: S. A. Brooke, *Early English Literature*, 1892. Contains some of the *Riddles*. J. M. Garnett, Transl. of *Elene*, new ed., 1901; *Elene*, L. H. Holt, 1904; *Andreas*, R. K. Root, 1899; *Juliana*, W. Strunk, 1905; *The Poems of Cynewulf*: C. W. Kennedy; *Judith*, text and translation by A. S. Cook.

\*\* *Early English Lyrics*: E. K. Chambers and F. Sidgwick. 1906.



## Early History and Chronicles

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. I, chap. V.

In libraries in larger cities the reader will find a work entitled \* *Six Old English Chronicles*, translated by J. A. Giles, 1848. The six are: Asser's *Life of Alfred*,<sup>1</sup> Ethelwerd's *Chronicles*, *Gildas*, *Nennius*, *Geoffrey of Monmouth*<sup>2</sup> and *Richard of Cirencester*.

The earliest of these is *Gildas* (500?–570?) and the date of the writing of his book is about 547. It is an attack upon "the wickedness and corruption of the British church and state." Part of his attack is a historical narrative for a period of nearly half a century following the battle of Mount Badon. Its interest is in the fact that it is the oldest section of written English history in existence.

The work of *Nennius* (c. 800) in this collection is entitled the *Historia Brittonum*,<sup>3</sup> and appears to be a recasting of a collection of earlier writings. A summary of the contents is in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. I, p. 77.

The next work available in modern editions and translations is Bede's \*\*\* *Ecclesiastical History*, Everyman's Library. Bede (673–735) was a monk of St. Hilda's at Whitby in Yorkshire. His history covers the period from the invasion of Caesar to the year 731. His work as a historian is accurate and truthful. He does not fail to point out when he is stating fact and when hearsay; his style is simple and direct.

## ALFRED (840–901)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. I, chap. VI.

The importance of King Alfred as a national hero is known to every school boy. The king who allowed the good wife's cakes to burn upon the hearth, while he sat thinking out a plan to save

<sup>1</sup> See p. 10.<sup>2</sup> See p. 15.<sup>3</sup> See p. 14. *Arthurian Legends*.

England from the Danes, is with Richard the Lion-Hearted among the great shadows of our youthful imaginations. But as scholar, literary man, philosopher, and reformer he is more important to English literature than as an impractical cook and invincible warrior.

Alfred translated into Old English the works of scholars and philosophers in order that the people might have enlightenment. Latin was the language of the learned, but it was a language which the people did not know, hence knowledge was not available to them until Alfred undertook the task. One might say that Alfred had a vision of the renaissance centuries before the Renaissance came, and his desire to rule over an educated country showed him to be a statesman of unusual foresight.

He translated, among other things, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (it had been written in Latin), a work of a Spanish ecclesiastic Orosius, which Alfred made into a compendium of geography and of universal history, Boethius *On the Consolations of Philosophy*, St. Augustine's *Soliloquies* and codified the laws. To him is attributed also the beginning of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. (See next section.)

\*\*\*Asser's (d. 909?) *Life of King Alfred*: Transl., by L. C. Jane. 1924.

\* *King Alfred as an Educator of his People and Man of Letters*: S. A. Brooke. 1901.

\*\* *The Life and Times of Alfred the Great*: C. Plummer. 1902.

\*\*\* *King Alfred's Version of Boethius*: Transl., by W. J. Sedgefield. 1900.  
*Alfred the Great*: Beatrice N. Lees.

### From Alfred to the Conquest

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. 1, chap. vii.

For about two centuries and a half after Alfred's reign the history of England was recorded in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, several versions of which have survived. The period of the earlier part of the *Chronicle* was one of warfare and national chaos, during which time learning and literature were able to make but little progress. Included in the pages of this history



are some examples of early poetry, *The Battle of Maldon* (sometimes called *Byrhtnoth's Death*), the account of a defeat inflicted by the Danish invaders, and *The Battle of Brunanburh* (937), the account of a victory over Scots and Danes, being the two most famous of these poems. Interesting, too, is the terse prose account of Harold's defeat at Senlac (Hastings) by William of Normandy.

There is no other literature of this period, with the single exception of a poem *The Grave*, to mention.

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- \*\* *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: Transl. by S. Ingram. Everyman's Library.  
A translation of *The Battle of Maldon* under the title of *Byrhtnoth's Death* was published by J. M. Garnett, 1901, with other specimens of early poetry.  
*The Battle of Brunanburh*: Transl. by Alfred, Lord Tennyson.  
*The Grave*: Transl. by H. W. Longfellow in *Three Poems from the Anglo-Saxon*.

## The Norman Conquest

Camb. Hist. Eng Lit., vol. I, chap. VIII.

The Norman Conquest of England in 1066 brought to an end the period of Old English or Anglo-Saxon literature. Latin was again emphasized as the language of the learned; the followers of William spoke Norman-French; and the conquered common people were left their vulgar tongue in which to whisper among themselves. As a literary language Old English fell mortally wounded at the battle of Senlac.

But as the language as a spoken tongue was not killed, the spirit of the old survived in it, and when English was once more to emerge as the language of our literature, although it was a changed English, the ancient soul of it was the same. The conquest did not break, it only interrupted, the continuity of English literature. In fact, the stream of literature was refreshed and widened by the Norman addition.

"The gain to English literature that accrued from the Norman

Conquest in three directions is so great as to be obvious to the most superficial observer. The language was enriched by the naturalization of a Romanic vocabulary; methods of expression and ideas to be expressed were greatly multiplied by the incursion of Norman methods and ideas; and the cause of scholarship and learning was strengthened by the coming of scholars whose reputation was, or was to be, European, and by the links that were to bind Paris and Oxford.”<sup>1</sup>

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*Short History of the Norman Conquest of England*: E. A. Freeman.

*England under the Normans and Angevins*: H. W. C. Davis.

*A Short History of England*: George M. Trevelyan, 1 vol.

#### Latin Chroniclers from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Centuries

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. I, chap. IX.

A great number of chronicles, written in Latin, were composed during the reigns of the Norman and Angevin kings, *i.e.*, from the time of William the Conqueror to that of Henry II. These chronicles are usually histories that begin with the myths and legends concerning the founding of Britain, then carry the story down to the chronicler's own day and become vivid accounts of contemporary events. The more important have been translated, but these versions are accessible principally in the larger libraries. A few may be had in easily obtained editions.

\*\*\*Geoffrey of Monmouth's (1100?-1154) *Histories of the Kings of Britain*<sup>2</sup> has been translated by Sebastian Evans and is in Everyman's Library. It is a romance rather than a history, for it deals in part with "the kings who dwelt in Britain before the incarnation of Christ." It is also important for the portion devoted to the story of King Arthur, which will be referred to later.

<sup>1</sup> P. 169, *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> See also pp. 9 and 15.



\*\*\* *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond* (fl. 1200), translated by L. C. Jane, 1922, is analyzed by Carlyle in *Past and Present*.<sup>1</sup> It is a picture of social life in England in the twelfth century, together with an intimate account of the life of the monasteries.

The following chronicles, in translation, are accessible in large libraries: *Chronicles of the Crusades*: J. A. Giles, 1848; *Flores Historiarum* (from the Creation to 1326): C. D. Yonge, 2 vols., 1853; \* *Giraldus Cambrensis* (d. circa 1220): T. Wright, 1863, new ed.; *Gerald the Welshman*: H. Owen, 1904; *Henry of Huntingdon* (d. circa 1155): T. Forester, 1853; *Roger of Hoveden* (d. circa 1201): H. T. Riley, 2 vols., 1853; \* *William of Malmesbury* (d. 1143?): J. A. Giles, 1847; \*\* *Matthew Paris* (d. 1259): J. A. Giles, 3 vols., 1852-4; *Ordericus Vitalis* (1075-1143?): T. Forester, 4 vols., 1855-6; *Roger of Wendover* (d. 1236): J. A. Giles, 2 vols., 1849; *Florence of Worcester*: T. Forester, 1854.

## GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- \* *The Origin of the English Constitution*: G. B. Adams.
- The Crusades*: G. W. Cox.
- Canute the Great*: L. M. Larsen.
- Medieval England*: Mary Bateson, 1903.
- The Crusades*: T. S. Archer, and C. L. Kingsford.
- English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*: J. J. Jusserand. 1889.
- Pilgrim Life in the Middle Ages*: S. Heath.
- English Legal History*: F. W. Maitland and C. E. Montague, 1 vol.
- Civilization During the Middle Ages*: G. B. Adams.
- Essays on Medieval Literature*: W. P. Ker. 1905.
- (Malory, Chaucer, Froissart, etc.)
- Laws and Politics in the Middle Ages*: E. Jenks. 1898.
- Kings' Letters, from the days of Alfred to the accession of the Tudors*: R. Steele, King's Classics series. 1903.
- English Life in the Middle Ages*: L. F. Salzman. 1926.
- The Wandering Scholars*: H. Waddell. 1927.
- The Irish Element in Medieval Culture*: H. Zimmer.

## Early Transition English (1150-1250)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. 1, chap. xi

\*\*\* *The Nun's Rule, or The Ancren Riwele* (13th century), translated by J. Morton, 1924, originally existed in English as well as Latin versions. The author is unknown, although Richard Poore, bishop of Salisbury from 1217 to 1229, has been suggested. The purpose of the book is to provide spiritual

<sup>1</sup> See p. 307.

counsel for three religious women who are dedicated to a holy secluded life outside the walls of a nunnery. It is written with charm and individuality and is one of the most delightful of accessible medieval documents.

### The Arthurian Legend

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. I, chap. XII.

Although reference has already been made to the first appearance in English of the story of Arthur in Geoffrey's *Chronicle* the chronological sequence of the history of the legend goes back before Geoffrey to chronicles of England written in Latin. The first of these is the *Historia Brittonum*, commonly ascribed to a Welshman named Nennius, and compiled probably not later than the ninth century. Nennius, again, asserts that he is a gatherer of material from sources already existing in his day. According to Nennius, some time after the death of Hengist Arthur fought in twelve great battles<sup>1</sup> as a chieftain of the Britons against the English (Angles). The date, historically, is around A.D. 520. The twelfth and last battle was that of Mount Badon, destined to be one of the famous fights in the later versions of the legends, although overshadowed in final importance by another referred to in *Annales Cambriae* (tenth century) and assigned to the year 537, "the battle of Camlan, in which Arthur and Medraut (Modred) fell."

These early annals, beyond emphasizing Arthur as a bearer in battle of an image of the Virgin or of the Cross, and describing him as a great warrior, give none of the details which legend was later to invent and gather about his figure.

He appears again in Welsh poems which in their present form are not earlier than the twelfth century, but contain a background of older legend.<sup>2</sup> The mystery of Arthur's grave,

<sup>1</sup> For an incident of one of these battles, as described by Nennius, see Wordsworth, *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, X, Struggle of the Britons Against the Barbarians.

<sup>2</sup> See Matthew Arnold: *On the Study of Celtic Literature*.



referred to in these poems, gave birth to the legend that Arthur did not really fall at the battle of Camlan, but lived on and will again return. This legend was current in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany at the beginning of the twelfth century.

In Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of Welsh tales entitled \*\*\* *The Mabinogion* (Everyman's Library) the story of \*\*\* *Kulhwch and Olwen* reveals Arthur, not as an ideal warrior, but as a fairy king able to overcome enemies by magic. He is, however, portrayed as ruler of a definite kingdom the geography of which can be traced to-day.<sup>1</sup> This story gives internal evidence of being founded on much older material.

The historic Arthur has disappeared in these Celtic stories of him and he has become a mighty wonder-worker from fairyland, who has associated with him noble followers such as Kay and Bedivere, his equals in the possession of magic powers.

The next step in the development of Arthur as a hero of chivalry and defender of the faith came from contact of these Celtic legends with the civilization of the Normans. In Brittany especially there seems to have been an expansion of stories about Arthur and his knights, and it is probably from these Breton sources that the Normans first came to know him.<sup>2</sup>

By the beginning of the twelfth century the Normans had carried the Conquest far enough to include a firm occupation of South Wales. Robert, Earl of Gloucester, a natural son of Henry I, was overlord of Glamorgan, and it was under his immediate patronage that Geoffrey of Monmouth compiled his \* *Histories of the Kings of Britain*.<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey mentions a "British book" that served him as the basis of his history; unfortunately no such book is now known to exist, and some critics have not believed that he had such a source. It is thought, moreover,

<sup>1</sup> See Ernest Rhys: *Celtic Folk-Lore*, vol. II, p. 572.

<sup>2</sup> See Wace: *Roman de Brut*, I, 9994.

<sup>3</sup> Transl. by S. Evans. (Everyman's Library.)

that his enlargement of the Arthurian story was mainly his own invention, supplemented perhaps by a knowledge of Welsh and Breton folk-lore.

In this prose epic the figure of Merlin now appears, and a whole book is devoted to his prophecies. Arthur's castle is Tintagel and the hero-king not only triumphs over enemies at home, but conquers a great part of Europe, and forces Rome itself to pay tribute to him. In the midst of this purported history, Arthur also continues as the wonder-worker of the older legends. And here we meet for the first time Guinevere, a wife born of a noble Roman family. The ending of Geoffrey's story is familiar to readers of Tennyson. In Arthur's absence Modred seizes the crown and forms an adulterous union with Guinevere; Arthur returns; in a final battle Modred is slain and Guinevere becomes a nun; but Arthur himself is mortally wounded, and is borne from the battlefield to the island of Avalon "for the healing of his wounds."<sup>1</sup> Lancelot, Tristram, and the Holy Grail do not, however, appear in Geoffrey's narratives. They belong to the next development of the Arthurian stories.

France now took up the Arthurian stories and many versions, prose and verse, were written, expanding and elaborating the tales, and laying stress on individual deeds and adventures. One of the most important of these French versions was the *Brut* of the Norman, Wace (1155). It is founded in part on Geoffrey of Monmouth, but incorporates new material. Arthur is now seen as the flower of chivalry and the Round Table is first mentioned. Its original purpose, according to Wace, was to seat the knights so that all questions of precedence would be avoided.

Early in the thirteenth century the English Layamon wrote a poem, \*\* *Brut*, having as its purpose to tell the story of Britain from the time of the Flood. This work he based upon Wace's *Brut*. Layamon described himself as a priest of Ernley (now

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tennyson: *Idylls of the King*. *Guinevere* and *The Passing of Arthur*.



Arley Regis in Worcestershire). It has been thought that because he lived near the borders of Wales some of his additions were derived from Celtic sources; it is, however, more probable that his new materials were Continental in origin.

The interest that Layamon's poem has for the modern reader is found in part in the revelation of the author's English individuality. He is no mere copyist or translator. Further, the reader will enjoy the naïve account of the adventure of the founder of Britain, Brutus, great-grandson of "Eneas the duke," for the story does not begin with Noah but with Eneas sailing from Italy. The Middle Ages apparently did not doubt the derivation of the name Britain from that of the mythical first king and founder, Brutus. Here, too, the reader may find not only an Arthur who is defender of the faith and maker of a kingdom based on law and order, but also the first telling in English poetry of the tale of King Lear (Leir) and his three daughters, and the story of Cymbeline.

Layamon's *Brut* is accessible in a modern prose translation in Eugene Mason's \*\* *Arthurian Chronicles* (Everyman's Library); the same volume containing likewise a translation of Wace. Morley gives a summary of Layamon's *Brut* in *English Writers*, vol. III, p. 212. The original text, accompanied by a translation, was edited by F. Madden in 1847.

From Layamon's time onward the Arthurian stories were not only further expanded, but likewise had added to them and assimilated with them a host of other stories and subsidiary legends. Merlin and Gawain, in particular, became prominent characters, Merlin, as magician and prophet; Gawain, as renowned warrior and follower of adventures to glorify the fame of Arthur's court. Gawain, however, in the course of time evolved from the paragon of courtesy, particularly in the Grail legends, to "a reckless and irreverent knight." The most delightful of all the English romances about Gawain is the famous \*\*\* *Sir Gawain*

*and the Green Knight*. This poem was unsurpassed in our literature until the figure of Chaucer appeared.

The story of Lancelot and of his illicit love for Arthur's queen, Guinevere, is a later development, which in the end, was to become the dominating element in the popular imagination. The emphasis on Lancelot came from French versions, and belongs to the type of romance that elaborates the theory of "courtly love."

Associated with the Lancelot story is the quest of the Holy Grail, another long and complex expansion of the Arthurian "matter of Britain." The origins of the Grail story are obscure; but they illustrate the ideals of monastic asceticism, especially in the character of Galahad, the perfect knight. The history of these legends will be found in A. Nutt: *Legends of the Holy Grail*, 1902, and in Everyman's Library, \*\*\* *The High History of the Holy Grail*.

Last of the famous medieval stories to be drawn into the Arthurian cycle was the story of Tristram, Iseult and King Mark of Cornwall. This story is definitely pagan and Celtic in origin. It is a passionate love-story and one of the world's great tragedies. The best English prose version, founded however upon French sources, is Hilaire Belloc's \*\*\* *Tristram and Iseult*.<sup>1</sup>

The culmination of all the medieval stories of Arthur was finally reached in Sir Thomas Malory's superb prose \*\*\* *Le Morte d'Arthur*,<sup>2</sup> published by Caxton in 1485 (written in 1470). Although Malory lived some seventy years after Chaucer, his version is the final summary of medieval chivalry, unaffected in Malory's mind by the new atmosphere of the Renaissance. Only in the greatness of his prose style does he proclaim another age.

<sup>1</sup> See also Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*; Swinburne, *Tristram of Lyonesse*; and Edward Arlington Robinson, *Tristram*.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted in Everyman's Library. See also Mead's *Selections from Sir Thomas Malory's Morte Darthur*, 1897; and Strachey's Globe edition.



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\*\*\* E. K. Chambers: *Arthur of Britain*. 1927.  
The story of Arthur in its legendary and historical aspects.

## Metrical Romances (1200-1500)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. I, chaps. XIII, XIV.

It is not easy to choose for a modern reader from the number of medieval romances, outside the Arthurian stories. So much depends upon whether the reader is interested in following the incidents composed of naïve adventures, the slaying of Saracens and dragons, and the numerous other perils of medieval heroes. The English romances were founded upon the French, but were written for a more miscellaneous public. The French romances were intended for the court; the English, for popular consumption. They are, usually, therefore, shorter than the originals and substitute often incident and strange adventure for the more ornamental passages of the originals.

Some of the more famous romances, those which are accessible in modern translations, will be enumerated here in order that the reader may choose a few examples and thereby test the extent of his interest. Three prose translations, by Laura A. Hibbard, published 1911 under the title \* *Three Middle English Romances* (King Horn, c. 1250, Havelock, c. 1300, Beves of Hampton, c. 1300), may be suggested as a beginning.

It is probable, although French versions are known of Horn and Havelock, that these two stories are Northern in origin and that their development occurred in England. Likewise, the atmosphere of Beves suggests a viking origin. Horn is a romantic love-story in which the hero refuses to surrender to his passion

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until he has passed through seven years of knightly adventures. Havelock is the son of a Danish king, who after being handed over to a fisherman to be drowned, is saved by mystic signs which impress the fisherman. The latter takes Havelock to England where he becomes a kitchen-churl. He is betrothed to a princess through the evil intentions of a villain who has designs upon her inheritance, and she once more is reassured by mystic signs that her husband is greater than he seems. Finally, word comes from Denmark, whereupon Havelock and his princess come into their own again. Beves of Hampton is another story of an exiled heir who at last wins back his rightful place. The hero is sent by a treacherous mother as a slave to a Saracen king, but after adventures in Barbary and the slaying of a dragon at Cologne, regains his inheritance in England. His princess is a Saracen whom he has converted to Christianity, and with whom he escapes, marrying her en route at Cologne.

Although the complex thread of these narratives may appear to a modern reader "feeble and silly,"<sup>1</sup> nevertheless they reveal the taste of the times, and have, therefore, much to hold the attention of students of human nature.

More detailed summaries of these romances will be found in Baldwin's *English Medieval Literature*: Horn, pp. 118-121; Havelock, pp. 122-129; Beves, pp. 113-116.

Of a different type are the love-romances, some of them of great beauty, and capable of attracting the modern reader for their literary charm. A modern prose translation of typical examples will be found in Edith Rickert's *\*\* Early English Romances of Love*, 1908. (Oxford Medieval Library.) This collection contains *Floris and Blanchefleur*; *Sir Degrevant*; and *The Squire of Low Degree*.

*Floris and Blanchefleur* has oriental colour. *Blanchefleur* is a

<sup>1</sup> As Prof. Baldwin describes the incidents in *Beves*, *English Medieval Literature*, p. 116.



Christian princess carried off by the Saracens in Spain, who is subsequently educated along with the Saracen prince, Floris. After adventures centering about a magic ring, Blanchefleur is carried off as a slave to Egypt, where her lover succeeds in rescuing her in time for them to live happily ever afterwards.

Sir Degrevant belongs to the Arthurian cycle.

The Squire of Low Degree is a romantic story of a humble lover who aspires to the hand of "the king's daughter of Hungary." The lady is prepared to accept her suitor on condition that he become a distinguished knight. The king intervenes and imprisons the squire, but relents in the face of his daughter's obstinacy. The squire is set free to seek his adventures, from which he returns in due course to claim his bride. The story has charm and an absorbing background made up of the details of medieval life.

Another theme of medieval romance is that of friendship. A collection and translation of these has also been made by Edith Rickert in *Early English Romances of Friendship*, 1908 (Oxford Medieval Library). This book contains Amis and Amiloun, Sir Amadis; and The Tale of Gamelyn.

Of these the most delightful is Amis and Amiloun on the theme of friendship as a knightly virtue. Amiloun takes the place of his friend Amis in a trial by combat. He becomes a victim of leprosy. After a time Amiloun finds his friend, but at first does not recognize him. When he does, he resolves to remove the scourge from Amis by the sacrifice of his own children. Afterwards the children are found not dead but only sleeping, for the gods, touched by this instance of friendship, have spared them. The note of true pathos in this romance is unusual for the times.

The Tale of Gamelyn is interesting for its final version in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, after contributing elements to Thomas Lodge's novel *Rosalynde*.<sup>1</sup> A part of the story is now a

<sup>1</sup> See p. 102.

familiar one, thanks to Shakespeare. The younger son, mistreated by his elder brother, the defeat of the wrestler, the loyalty of old Adam, and the younger son's final triumph through the help of the king of the outlaws, these incidents of *As You Like It* are all in Gamelyn.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF MODERN VERSIONS OF ROMANCES

- \* *Aucassin and Nicolette*, and 15 other Medieval Romances and Legends. Transl., Eugene Mason. (Everyman's Library.)
- Early Lives of Charlemagne*: Eginhard and The Monk of St. Gall. Transl., by A. J. Grant, 1922. (9th century texts.)
- Thomas Bulfinch: \* *Legends of Charlemagne*. (Everyman's Library.)
- Chrétien de Troyes: *Eric and Enid*. (Everyman's Library.)
- Medieval Romances from the Lays of Marie de France*. Transl., Eugene Mason. (Everyman's Library.)
- William Morris: \* *Early Romances*. (Everyman's Library.)
- Medieval Romance in England*: L. A. Hibbard. 1924.
- \*\*\* *The Song of Roland*: Transl., by J. Crosland. 1924.
- \* *Medieval Lore, from Bartholomæus Anglicus* (13th century): modernized by R. Steele from the 14th century English translation of Trevisa. 1924.

### Early Poems

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. I, chap. xv.

In the British Museum in the same manuscript which contains *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are found three other English poems, \* *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, and *Patience*. None of these poems exists in any other known source. The handwriting is late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. Apart from *Sir Gawain*, which has already been referred to as one of the gems of medieval romance, the most famous of the other three poems is *Pearl*.

This poem (c. 1358) had been translated (1921) by Prof. Israel Gollancz and may be found in the Oxford Medieval Library series. It is a poem unusual in theme, delicate and tender in its treatment of the narrator's grief for the loss of his "pearl," an infant girl who was under two years of age at the time of her death. Falling asleep on her grave, he has a vision of the maid in heaven, in a long procession of other maidens, and she instructs



him, from the other side of a stream that separates them, in lessons of faith and resignation. In the end, the narrator is rewarded with a vision of the celestial city. The poem is a blend of medieval allegory and biblical paraphrase, teaching, it is true, a theological lesson, but the whole is infused with a personal feeling that lifts it from didacticism into the sphere of true poetry.

The other two, *Cleanness* and *Patience* are important poems, but less moving than *Pearl*. They are not accessible in modern versions. Professor Gallancz believes that all four of these poems are by the same author. If this be accepted as a fact, *Pearl* and *Sir Gawain* are evidence that he was a great poet. There have been many theories concerning the authorship of these poems, but there is no positive evidence for any definite assurance concerning his identity.

*Cursor Mundi* (c. 1300) is a very long poem by an unknown author. The writer complains in a prologue that men rejoice to hear romances of Troy, of Alexander, of Arthur and of Charlemagne and especially to hear of the "paramours" of the ancient heroes. There is, he says, no lady to compare with the Virgin Mary, and he, therefore, will write his poem in her honour. He then proceeds to his account of the "seven ages of the world,"<sup>1</sup> following closely the biblical narrative from the creation, adding often and expanding his story with additions from many sources. The legend of the Holy Rood is among these additions. Then follows an account in detail of the youth of Mary, of the birth of Christ, the story now following the account in the New Testament, with the crucifixion, the descent into Hell, the careers of the apostles, the assumption of the Virgin Mary, until he reaches doomsday, concluding with some good advice upon the transitory nature of this world and its pleasure and with a final prayer to

<sup>1</sup> The seven ages were: from the creation to Noah; from the Flood to the Tower of Babel; from Abraham to the death of Saul; from David to the Captivity; from the parentage of the Virgin to the Baptist; from the baptism of Christ to the "invention" of the Cross; and Doomsday and after.

the Virgin. In the numerous and leisurely digressions of this poem is a wealth of medieval legends, drawn from wide reading in the literature of the age. A \* summary of this poem will be found in Morley's *English Writers*, IV, 124.

### “Piers the Plowman”

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. I

#### \*\* *Piers the Plowman* (c. 1375)

This remarkable poem has come down in three different manuscripts, the collation of which with dialectical and other important differences is one of the problems of scholarship. The authorship, too, is another unsolved problem, although the usual attribution is to William Langland, who is, however, only a name to us, since nothing is known of the man Langland. Of the three manuscripts, that known as the A text is the best, for it reveals a poem that is a work of genius. A translation of this text will be found, together with a rendering of a portion of the B text, in Jessie L. Weston's \*\* *Romance, Vision and Satire* (1912).

The poem is a dream vision following in general conception the form of the medieval allegory of which the type is the French *Roman de la Rose*.<sup>1</sup> Many of the dream figures are personifications of virtues or vices, of institutions or tendencies concerning problems of the writer's own day. *Piers the Plowman* contains, however, many striking and vivid sketches of real persons, and for this reason the poem seems to the modern reader more “alive” than do some of the medieval allegories, and its interest is derived from its character-sketches which form, as it were, a panorama of people of the medieval world. Piers himself is the honest laborer and during his dream or vision he converses with all sorts

<sup>1</sup> The earlier portion of the *Roman de la Rose*, by Guillaume de Lorris, dates from between 1200 and 1230; the latter portion, by Jean de Meun, between 1270 and 1282. (Baldwin, *Eng. Med. Lit.*, p. 178.) A translation into modern English verse by F. S. Ellis will be found in the Temple Classics series. See also Chaucer, p. 28.



and conditions of men, pilgrims, palmers, friars, a pardoner, ditchers and delvers, cooks and their scullions, tavern keepers, lawyers, beggars, townspeople, a rat-catcher, serfs, members of the nobility, "second-handmen a heap," and others, all drawn with a note of individuality so that they are not mere types, as was so often the case in medieval allegory.

The poet combines with his ability to portray the infinite variety of life a sober zeal for reform and for truth. And it is the Plowman who becomes the guide of the people in their quest of Saint Truth, first teaching them to work, to do the task allotted to each in his proper station in life.

The other texts in which this poem survives prove its justified popularity, for they contain later additions and remodellings which show a continued interest in this work. In the best, or A text, the modern reader is impressed by the poet's feeling for a true democracy within a framework of law and order, for his comprehension of the equality of all men before God, and for his hatred of shams, hypocrisies, and social injustice. Above all does he hold fast to the value and dignity of honest labour.

\*\*\* *Piers Plowman*: William Langland. (Everyman's Library.)

### JOHN WYCLIF (1320?–1384)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. II.

There were translations into English of various books of the *Bible* before the days of John Wyclif, and at first such versions, made principally for the use of inmates of monasteries or abbeys, were not forbidden. It was Wyclif's general attitude toward the Church and religious controversies that caused opposition to his plan of translating the Scriptures. Old chronicles report that he did translate the whole Bible, and two versions now exist which have been ascribed to him, but we have no means of knowing whether these texts were made by Wyclif or by some of his followers.

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\* *A Dream of John Ball:* William Morris.

A fictitious narrative of the revolt of the peasants.

*John Wiclif*, by Philip Sergeant.

## The Mandeville Translations

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. III.

\*\*\* *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* has been the delight of thousands of readers for the last five hundred years. Few books can claim to be listed among the "best sellers" for any such continuous period of time. But modern research has demonstrated, fortunately without impairing our liking for this book, that Sir John never lived and that his travels never took place. In fact the whole thing, although purporting to be a guide book for pilgrims going to Jerusalem, is a compilation of numerous and varied sources, legend, history, wonders of natural history, actual voyages, fused by a liberal use of an infinite imagination. The author has been compared to Defoe in his ability to narrate improbabilities in the simple, sober language of fact and with the addition of minute touches that imply personal experience. He is impartial between truth and fiction, treating history and legend alike, provided either will yield him a striking incident or a good story. *The Travels* are almost a complete encyclopedia not only of the "best that has been known and thought in the world" but also of what might be imagined, if one can conceive of such a universal knowledge-book cast in the form of romance.

The book exists in three principal versions, a Latin, a French, and an English. All that is known definitely about the author is that he was not an Englishman, but that, whoever he was, he wrote at Liège before 1371, and in French. Jean d'Outremeuse of Liège has been surmised to be the author, since he is known to



have possessed the requisite knowledge. Outremeuse himself, in 1372, has left a record that Sir John was a man called Jean à la Barbe, a statement which is regarded as another fiction.

The best edition for the general reader is the modernized version by A. W. Pollard, \*\*\* *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, 1900.

### JOHN GOWER (1335 or earlier-1408)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. VI.

This poet, a contemporary of the much greater Chaucer, is important in the history of the short story in English. He was greatly admired in his own day by the reading public and by no less a person than his friend Chaucer<sup>1</sup>, but to the modern world he seems a dull, uninspired figure compared with the author of *The Canterbury Tales*. American visitors to London will find his magnificent tomb and effigy in St. Saviour's Cathedral, Southwark, hard by London Bridge.

The most noted of his works is the *Confessio Amantis* (1390) written in English, an allegorical framework serving as the underlying structure for the introduction of his narratives. The prologue once past, Gower sets forth a young lover having a May morning vision in which Venus, the queen of love, commands him to confess to Genius her priest. The latter, to illustrate the various branches of the seven deadly sins, tells the young lover more than one hundred tales. The purpose of the poem is a didactic one, although this purpose is less stressed than it is in his other work. After a review of the condition of the human race Gower proceeds to the subject of the poem: "the chief matter of the book" to be "founded upon love, and the infatuated passions of lovers." He hopes, however, to combine pleasure with in-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chaucer's dedication of his *Troilus and Criseyde* to "moral Gower," who is exhorted to correct this poem. In the *Confessio Amantis* Gower returns the compliment, making Venus say that she is much beholden to Chaucer for the love songs he made in his youth in her honour.

struction, and admits with pleasant modesty that he is not equal to reforming the world.

The stories are taken from varied sources, Ovid being one of the principal, the Bible, and Continental collections. Gower's style is smooth, simple, and fluent, without, however, the dramatic skill and humour of Chaucer, but with considerable power of evoking the picturesque. A small quantity of Gower will content the general reader, for there is no denying the fact that with his virtues he is also long-winded and monotonous.

G. C. Macaulay: \* *Selections from the Confessio Amantis*. 1903.

### GEOFFREY CHAUCER (c. 1340-1400)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. VII.

Chaucer is the first individual giant to appear among the English poets able to stand beside Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. Important as is the list of literature up to Chaucer's time, and delightful as much of it is to read even to-day, nevertheless with the appearance of this poet the most casual reader will recognize in him a new age and a unique spirit. The peculiarity of genius is that when confronting it one hears a new voice speaking in tones not heard before. Thus does one feel in the presence of Chaucer.

The facts of Chaucer's life are difficult to trace in detail, but as far as what is known about him has bearing on his literary career these facts may be summarized as follows: he held a position at court under Edward III and Richard II; his patron was John of Gaunt, of the House of Lancaster; he spent some time in France, some in Italy, and the latter years of his life in England.

His poetry follows the three divisions of his life in France, Italy, and England. He translated in part the *Romaunt of the Rose* of the Frenchmen Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun.



It is not certain that all of this partial translation is by Chaucer, but the first and last parts are most probably his work. The result is more than a mere translation, for the rendering has poetical and witty qualities which give it an originality of its own.

From a version entitled *Il Filostrato* by the Italian Boccaccio, Chaucer derived in part one of his great poems *Troilus and Criseyde*, out of which Shakespeare was later to make his play of *Troilus and Cressida*. Chaucer does not mention Boccaccio as his source and the question of derivation is obscure, since Chaucer's poem is neither a translation nor makes use of more than about a third of Boccaccio's story. He has added and developed characters, with greater emphasis upon the dramatis personæ. It is Chaucer's dramatic skill in portraying living people which is one of the characteristics that marks him off from his predecessors. Another quality of his genius, seen for the first time in this poem, is the finish of his poetry; his control over his medium, verse, is entirely adequate for the expression of his meaning. His poetry has likewise vitality and sweetness. Further, in the character of Pandarus he shows his irony and humour, qualities to be developed more fully in later poems.

*The House of Fame* is an unfinished allegory, a dream-poem of the earlier medieval type, containing resemblances to passages in Dante. The first book re-tells the whole story of Virgil's *Aeneid*; in the second, a mysterious eagle carries the poet off to the House of Fame. In the third book the allegorical description of the house and its inhabitants is suddenly cut short. Apparently Chaucer was dissatisfied with the subject and abandoned it. Again he reveals his irony and humour, more fully this time, and in certain passages, his greatness as a poet.

*The Legend of Good Women*<sup>1</sup> is another unfinished poem. The main purpose is to tell the stories of famous women who were martyrs of love. The poem is a mixture of moods, grave and gay,

<sup>1</sup> See Tennyson: *A Dream of Fair Women*.

## JOHN LYDGATE (c. 1370—c. 1450)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. VIII.

Not much more is known of John Lydgate's life than that he was a monk in the Suffolk Abbey of St. Edmund's Bury. He refers to Chaucer as his "master," either because he knew him personally or because Lydgate looked up to him as the source of his own poetical inspiration. Lydgate is lacking in most of the qualities that make Chaucer a pleasure to read, one of the most notable defects being his tediousness. The chief reason for calling the modern reader's attention to him is to reveal the contrast with the genius and uniqueness of Chaucer. None of the imitators approaches to the excellence of the "master," yet in his own day Lydgate was well thought of as the fame of his *Troy Book* attests. In this he tells over again, in some thirty thousand lines, the story of the famous siege.

It is difficult for the general reader to get much idea of Lydgate's work unless he is prepared to read the poems reprinted by the Early English Text Society. These are available<sup>1</sup> usually only in the larger libraries. The following references are, however, readily accessible and contain selected passages:

H. Morley: *English Writers*. VI. 1891.

T. Warton: *History of English Poetry*, III. Ed. W. E. Hazlitt. 1871.

Courthope: \* *History of English Poetry*. I. 1895.

See also Lydgate in the Dictionary of National Biography.

## THOMAS OCCLEVE

Another follower of the Chaucerian manner was Thomas Occleve, or Hoccleve (c. 1368—c. 1450). He is briefer and not so tedious as Lydgate. The same references to Morley, Warton, and Courthope, given under John Lydgate, will serve the curious reader as references to Occleve. Other minor writers of this period are negligible. Poetry, and particularly technical control over meter, passed into a decline that was to last for some time.

<sup>1</sup> Not all of them, even in this series.



## JAMES I OF SCOTLAND (1394-1437)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. x.

There have not been many kings who have had leisure or aptitude for the writing of poetry, but James I of Scotland is an exception. The leisure was forced upon him, for he was captured by the English and held a prisoner at Windsor and other places for eighteen years. It was while he was a captive that he fell in love with Joan Beaufort and wrote a record of the event in the poem *The Kingis Quair*.<sup>1</sup> He follows the allegorical model of *The Romance of the Rose*. James concludes the poem with a commendation of his work to his masters, Chaucer and Gower, and shows throughout an intimate appreciation of Chaucer as a poet by the literary skill with which he echoes him. It may interest the modern reader to be reminded that just before James was released from his captivity (1424), he married the lady who is the subject of his poem.

D. G. Rossetti in *\*\*The King's Tragedy*, tells through the mouth of Kate Barlass, the story of the assassination of James (1437) by Robert Graeme, concluding with these words, spoken by his queen:

“ And ‘ O James!’ she said,—‘ My James!’ she said,—  
     ‘ Alas for the woful thing,  
     That a poet true and a friend of man,  
     In desperate days of bale and ban,  
     Should needs be born a King!’ ”

## English Prose in the Fifteenth Century

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. XII.

The vernacular tongue was still making slow progress in the fifteenth century as a medium for the writing of serious books. Latin, the universal language, understood by all scholars at home

<sup>1</sup> “Quair” means “book.”

and abroad, continued to be used for important writings and continued so to be used even later than the time of Francis Bacon. The books in English are exceptions. There was emerging, however, in the State an untutored middle-class whose political influence could not be entirely neglected, and it was to this new public that such books as did appear in English were addressed.

John Capgrave (1393-1464) wrote a *Chronicle of England* which will interest readers who desire to follow English history in the older chronicles. It is extremely terse and condensed in style, although following an outline which begins with the Creation and ends with the year 1417. He says himself that his history might be called rather an abbreviation of the chronicles than a book. We learn from him a new explanation of why Friday is an unlucky day: Adam was born on a Friday. The section dealing with Henry IV is valuable historically.

The standard edition, but not in a modernised text, *Chronicles of England*, ed. F. C. Hingeston, 1858, Rolls Series, is accessible only in large libraries. Further information about Capgrave may be found in B. Ten Brink's *History of English Literature*, vol. III, p. 17ff: English trans. by W. C. Robinson, 1893.

One of the most interesting collections of prose documents of this period are the \*\*\* *Paston Letters* (written between the years 1422 and 1509), in which will be found a detailed picture of three generations of a well-to-do Norfolk family. The complete series has been edited by J. Gairdner in four volumes, 1901. See also the English translation of H. A. Taine's *History of English Literature*, vol. I, bk. I, chap. II, sec. VIII, 1906.

Paston Hall, where the family lived, is in Norfolk, near the sea, and close to Bronholm Priory, famed for the possession of a piece of the true Cross. William Paston became a judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1429. His wife was Agnes, heiress of Sir Edmund Berry, of Hertfordshire. Two of their sons, John and Edmund, were also educated for the legal profession, and



there were two other children, William and Elizabeth. Before his death in 1444, William Paston made a marriage for his son, John, with Margaret, heiress of John Manteby. Margaret Paston, as we learn from her letters, was an exceedingly good wife and able business woman.

*The Paston Letters:* Ed. by J. Fenn. New ed., 1924.

## WILLIAM CAXTON (1422?–1491)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. XIII.

The first book printed in English was William Caxton's translation of Raoul le Fevre's Troy book, which was published about 1475, entitled *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*, issued at Bruges.

In 1476 Caxton returned to England and established the first printing press in a house within the precincts of Westminster Abbey. Caxton's assistant was his apprentice Wynkyn de Worde, who was also to be his successor as master of the printing house. Apparently the newly founded press published at first small pamphlets, a number of which extant to-day have been tentatively believed to be his. The first two long books from his house were *The History of Jason* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The first dated book published in England was the *Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers*, issued on 18 November, 1477.

From this time there flowed from Caxton's press a series of great editions, including among others a new *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1483) with an interesting prologue by Caxton in which he expresses his great admiration for Chaucer and his poetry. This edition is illustrated by woodcuts of the various characters. Other works of Chaucer followed and in 1483 an edition of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.

Another famous book was Caxton's translation of *The Golden Legend*, based upon a Latin, a French, and an English version. But the climax of his fame and career as a printer



came with his edition of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. The prologue, written by Caxton, is an excellent example of literary criticism. No copy is now known to be extant of another important book from his press, his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>1</sup>

Up until the time of his death books continued to be issued from his press, some of them routine work such as statutes and service books for the church, but his own selections seem to have been governed by his literary tastes. He preferred poetry and romance, and as he had an independent fortune, was able to gratify his tastes without too much regard for commercial success. The reading public, of course, was a small one in his day, since education was then the privilege of only a few, and the public was therefore not in a position to dictate the policy of his publishing house.

Caxton's example was soon followed by the establishment of other presses in England, notably at St. Albans (c. 1479) and at Oxford (c. 1478).

Caxton's successor, Wynkyn de Worde, contented himself with reprints, waiting upon the popular demand, for he had to rely upon his press for his living. The only other English printer not publishing exclusively learned books, such as were issued at St. Albans and Oxford, was Richard Pynson.

The lack of enterprise shown by Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde resulted in a great deal of Continental competition, and many English books were printed by the presses at Antwerp. Pynson's most important issues were the first edition of Mandeville's *Travels* and the translation of *The Chronicles of Froissart* made (bet. 1523-1525) by John Bouchier, Lord Berners.

In addition to the presses already mentioned, a number of lesser printers sprang up, particularly at the beginning of the

<sup>1</sup> The Pepysian Library, at Magdalene College, Cambridge, contains his manuscript of the last six books of this work.

sixteenth century. It is perhaps superfluous to add that specimens of early English printing, especially those from the presses of Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde are much sought after by collectors and bibliophiles.

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See also vol. VI of *English Writers*: H. Morley. 1890.

*Books and their Makers during the Middle Ages*: G. H. Putnam.

## SIR JOHN BOURCHIER, LORD BERNERS (1467-1533)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. XIV.

The development of English prose in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century is mainly the work of three men, Caxton, Malory, and Lord Berners. Caxton substituted prose for metrical romance, and the works of his press helped to popularize the new medium. Malory, in the *Morte d'Arthur*, stamped prose with the individualism of style; and Lord Berners carried the technique of style still further by being the first to set the fashion for an ornate prose.

His translation of the *Chronicles* of Froissart is one of the classics of English literature, as well as for historians an invaluable source-book. Lord Berners was himself a soldier who had seen much service in the field; he had taken part in the siege of Terouenne and had been present with Henry VIII at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. He had been to Spain and to France, and had witnessed with his own eyes the last scenes of the dying age of chivalry. He is, therefore, more than a translator, for into his rendering of Froissart passes the reflections of his own experiences in court and in battle which give a vividness and freshness to his book that could not come merely from a study lamp. He is an adapter, not, as he says, translating literally, but rendering



the sense of the original. Although he still writes history as though he were writing fiction, he does, nevertheless, quote from the actual words of witnesses, and understands how such quotations give a sense of vivid reality to his account.

In addition to his *Chronicles* of Froissart, he translated two prose romances of the medieval type, *Arthur of Little Britain* and *Huon of Bordeaux*. The latter contains the character of Auberon (Oberon) King of the Fairies, whom later we are to meet in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Finally, Lord Berners was responsible for a very widely read work, *The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius*, which he translated from the Spanish of Antonio de Guevara. Guevara pretended to have found in an old manuscript the sayings ascribed to Marcus Aurelius, but the work was actually by Guevara.

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The standard edition of the complete work.

\*\*\* Sir John Froissart. *Chronicles of England, France, and Spain*. (Everyman's Library.) The most accessible inexpensive edition.

The Shakespeare Head has issued a reprint (1927) under the title *Froisart's Cronycles*.

#### Song Collections

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. XVI.

The general reader will find many examples of charming medieval songs and lyrics, outside of the ballads, about which generalisations concerning the whole cannot satisfactorily be made. Lovers of poetry as well as those curious about origins of English lyrics will have to go to anthologies and collections, however, for examples, unless they live near a large library.

\*\* *Early English Lyrics: Amorous, Divine, Moral and Trivial*. Ed. E. K. Chambers and F. Sidgwick. 1907.

With a valuable essay on aspects of the medieval lyric.

\* *Ancient English Christmas Carols*. Traditional; 1400-1700. Collected and arranged by Edith Rickert. 1914. Oxford Medieval Library.

*Remains of Early Popular Poetry*: Ed. W. C. Hazlitt. 4 vols. 1864-66.

\* *Wine, Women and Song*. Medieval Latin students' songs transl. into English verse by John Addington Symonds. Oxford Medieval Library. 1925.

\* *Early Sixteenth Century Lyrics*: F. M. Padelford. 1907.

## Ballads

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. II, chap. XVII.

Of all the "old" poetry of England, old that is in the sense of being in origin pre-Elizabethan, none is more likely to appeal to the modern reader than some of the ballads. How these poems originated, whether they are "communal," (i.e. the product of groups), or the work of individual poets, need not be discussed here. The ballads have come down to us through oral tradition, that is they were preserved by word of mouth handed on from father to son, and many of them probably had a long history before they took the shape in which we know them to-day. The manuscripts in which they were finally preserved are relatively late. The important fact is that they are not "literary" in the sense of being the work of conscious artists or professional writers, but came from the people, a statement no less true whether they were first composed by groups or by single individuals. But it is dangerous to say very much about the origins of the ballads, for scholarship stands ready to confute and confound any theory on this subject that may be found. All readers are grateful that many examples of ballads have survived, and speculation, too, may rest content with the contemplation of our treasure.

The ballads are narrative poetry, some of them closely akin to short stories. In none of them does an "author" reveal himself directly or indirectly, but each ballad is as impersonal as if the poem had suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

The ballads known to-day originated in the fifteenth century and earlier, but whether there was a still older body of ballads, going back before the Norman Conquest to the Germanic inva-



sions themselves, cannot now be determined. The question is suggested by the sure instinct for poetry and narrative revealed by the ballads we have. It is difficult to believe that this instinct did not have a long tradition behind it.

The ballads are of Scottish and English ancestry, however they first came into being, or whatever their precise age and relation to an earlier literature may be. The fighting along the Border between England and Scotland gave rise to some of the best of the ballads, and it is probable that these songs arose among the very men who had been in the fighting. Finally, the ballads have come down to us in many variant versions, a fact that points to their preservation by oral tradition.

The following list of ballads is suggested simply as a beginning:

\* *The Douglas Tragedy*; \*\*\* *The Hunting of the Cheviot*; \*\*\* *Sir Patrick Spens*; \*\* *The Three Ravens*; \* *Edward*; \* *The Twa Sisters*; \* *The Twa Brothers*; *The Cruel Brother*; \*\* *The Wife of Usher's Well*; \*\*\* *Kemp Owyne*; \*\* *Thomas Rymer*; *Sir Hugh, or The Jew's Daughter*; *Get Up and Bar the Door*; \*\*\* *The Nutbrowne Maid*; *Bonny Barbara Allan*; \*\*\* *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*; \*\*\* *Robin Hood's Death and Burial*; *Babylon*; \* *The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington*.

The following editions of the ballads are recommended:

*The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Ed. F. J. Child, 5 vols., 10 parts. 1882-98.

This is the standard edition.

\*\*\* *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. T. Percy. Everyman's Library. 2 vols.

This is one of the most accessible editions for the general reader.

For Robin Hood, see Sidney Lee's article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

For outlaws in general, see J. J. Jusserand's *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 252 ff.

See also Joseph Addison: *The Spectator*, Nos. 70, 74.

*The Popular Ballad*: F. B. Gummere. 1907.

Renascence  
and  
Reformation

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## RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III.

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See also General Bibliography on p. xi and xii.

### SIR THOMAS MORE (1478–1535)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. I.

Sir Thomas More's \*\*\* *Utopia* (1516, English Trans. 1551) is the first of a numerous series of books by English writers from his day to the present in which is portrayed an ideal common-

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wealth. Plato's *Republic* is the classic source of the idea, although not necessarily the source of the subject matter of the subsequent theorists. *Utopia* was originally written in Latin, and later translated into English, and since that time has taken its place not only as a classic but has also added an adjective "utopian" to the English language.

Sir Thomas More was both a classical scholar and a learned lawyer. He was profoundly impressed by St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, concerning which he delivered a series of lectures in London, and it was this work more recognizably than Plato's *Republic* that was the partial source of *Utopia*. He was a voluminous writer, *Utopia* being by no means his only literary work, but it is the only one <sup>1</sup> likely to interest the present-day reader.

His end was tragic, for he was beheaded for treason in the reign of Henry VIII, the basis of the charge being his refusal to make an oath which More held to be contrary to his faith.

*Utopia* purports to be the narrative of a sailor who describes his visit to a country <sup>1</sup> the government of which was a kind of communism. The striking feature (for Sir Thomas More's day) was the religious toleration of the Utopians, who recognized all religions having the fundamental belief in a deity and the immortality of the soul. Only atheists were disqualified from holding public office. Thanks to the efficiency of the communistic organization, no Utopian had to work more than six hours a day, but all, men and women, were given universal training for agriculture. Finally, the capital city, Amanrote, was a beautiful example of town planning, with clean, wide streets, detached houses, and beautiful gardens.

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*Utopia*, with Roper's *Life of More*, Camelot series.

See also Tennyson's poem *A Dream of Fair Women* for a reference to Margaret Roper, More's daughter.

## SIR THOMAS ELYOT (1499?–1546)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. I.

Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Boke of the Governour* (1531) describes the kind of education which members of a ruling class should be given. Elyot takes a wide view of his subject, beginning with the kinds of commonwealths that have existed, explaining the advantages in turn of a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a democracy. Since his conclusion is that a monarchy is the best form of government, he then proceeds to discuss the qualities necessary for the subordinate officers serving under a king. He would pick them from the aristocracy, but they must be well trained for the positions they are to occupy. The training required is then outlined by Elyot in detail. The need of athletic exercise is not neglected in this outline, although Elyot dislikes football. He concludes with statements of the high ideals which should result from this education. Elyot's educational plan was designed to produce in the student not specialization but a many-sided culture, firmly founded on the wisdom of antiquity (i.e., a knowledge of the Greek and Roman classics). His own book illustrates his theory, for he has drawn upon a wide range of sources.

*The Boke Named the Governour devised by Sir T. E. Elyot*: Ed. H. H. S. Croft, 1883.  
A more accessible edition is in Everyman's Library.

## The Book of Common Prayer (CRANMER, TINDALE AND COVERDALE)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. II.

Two of the superb pieces of English prose of this period were *The English Litany* (1545) and *The Book of Common Prayer*. Both



of these were largely or wholly the work of Archbishop Cranmer (1489-1556), who thus takes his place among the masters of English style. It is, of course, true that earlier translations into English were used as mosaic pieces in these two works, but the wholes were built into a design which seems to have been the effort of a single hand—that of Cranmer.

Three years after Cranmer's death, a second prayer-book was brought out during the reign of Elizabeth. The changes were numerous, concerned mainly with controversial doctrinal points, but in essence, as a literary document, Cranmer's work stands to-day. Only in the *Authorized Version* of the *Bible* will be found English as noble and as appropriate to the subject matter as in the *Litany* and *Prayer Book*.

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### WILLIAM TINDALE (c. 1484-1536)

Tindale's translation of the *New Testament*, although it has been superseded by that of the *Authorized Version*, is another literary monument. Objections continued to be made to translations into English, possibly because of the fear that the authority of the Church would be undermined by the exercise of such independent judgments, together with a belief that truth might be lost through errors in the translation itself. Nevertheless, as has been said in an earlier section, from before the time of Wyclif there had been a steady and increasing demand for the *Bible* in English, a demand which Tindale was to meet in part through his version of the *New Testament*. Tindale's rendering aroused opposition, however, chiefly on the ground of his "heretical" glosses, and his book was ordered burned (1527). It had been printed abroad.

The work begun by Tindale was finished by Miles Coverdale (1488-1568), who translated the *Old Testament*. Coverdale com-

bined his translation with Tindale's *New Testament* and printed it in England in 1537. A new edition was next prepared, printed in 1539. This is known as the *Great Bible*. It was followed by a second edition in 1540, and was set up by order of Cranmer in English churches. This second edition is now known as *Cranmer's Bible*, although his only share in its preparation was the writing of a preface. The people had won their demand and the *Bible* in English could now be read at home or in church.

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 A handbook with copious examples.

## Social Literature in Tudor Times

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. v.

A curious type of literature of this period is the "testament,"<sup>1</sup> originally derived from French examples, a mock will in which the author bequeaths to posterity his satirical ideas of his contemporary world. The most important of these, accessible to a modern reader, is *Colin Blowbol's Testament*, of which there is a reprint in W. C. Hazlitt's *Early Popular Poetry*, vol. I, 1864.

Colin, who has just been suffering from a "surfeit," composes, with the aid of an unscrupulous confessor, a will in which Colin's soul is bequeathed to Diana; and a large sum for a funeral feast at which the guests are to be graded according to their

<sup>1</sup> Specimens of this type of literature are to be found only in large libraries.



ability to stand strong drink. The author enumerates thirty-two kinds of wine formerly known. The book is a parody of the literature in praise of drinking.

See also *The Wyll of the Devyll* (c. 1550) by Humphrey Powell, reprinted by F. J. Furnivall, 1871, and in J. P. Collier's *Illustrations of Early English Popular Literature*, vol. I, 1862-3. This is a savage attack upon the Roman Catholic Church, but the satire covers also lawyers, loose livers, idle housewives, and butchers who sell stale meat.

Another variety of popular literature in Tudor times were songs and verses on the power of death over the priest, the king, the harlot, the lawyer, and the countryman. Shakespeare makes a reference to one of these songs, *The Shaking of the Sheets*, in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Some of these songs were broadsides illustrated with crude woodcuts and sold in the streets.

*The Shaking of the Sheets* is reprinted in J. W. Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, vol. I, p. 85, 1855-9. See also I. Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature (History of the Skeleton of Death)*.

Satires on women were another common form of literature. The origin of this type of satire was originally among writers shut in by monastic life from the peril of contact with women. Yet the peril of woman lurked closely enough outside the walls to upset pious meditation. This form of satire appeared at intervals into the eighteenth century, not forgetting, as we turn them over, Hamlet's grief-stricken cry "Frailty, thy name is woman!"

The ale-house is often pictured as the scene of these satires, where, apparently, while the husband was away working in the fields or at his trade, the wife went to meet her "gossips" (cronies). These satirical dogs, the authors, distrusted a widow as much as did old Tony Weller in Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*. The character drawing is frequently vivid and pungent in these satires, and



types give way to individual portraits. The perils of matrimony, particularly personified by a scolding wife, are set forth for the warning of the young and inexperienced male. The cruel husband, especially the one given to beating his wife, does not escape unscathed either. In general, these monkish writers dwell upon the talkativeness and capriciousness of women, together with the inability of the mere male to fathom their perverseness.

The *Complaynt of them that ben to late maryed* will be found in J. P. Collier's *Illustrations of Early English Popular Literature*, vol. I, 1862-3. For a discussion of the medieval origins of these satires, see T. F. T. Dyer's *Folk-Lore of Women*, 1905. This book is fully illustrated with quotations. *The Boke of Mayd Emlyn* is reprinted in W. C. Hazlitt's *Early English Popular Poetry*, vol. IV, p. 81, and *Twelve Mery Gestys of One Called Edyth* in W. C. Hazlitt's *Shakespeare Jest-Books*, vol. III, 1864. W. C. Hazlitt's *Early English Popular Poetry* contains other examples. Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* carries on, of course, the same tradition about the perverse, scolding woman. Finally, the ducking stool for female scolds was one of the municipal enterprises of our New England ancestors, a species of literal application of the theories expounded in these books.

### Jest Books.

Jest books, by no means extinct to-day, likewise appeared in considerable numbers, some of them in Latin, more in English. These books were collections of anecdotes, happy sayings, repartees, wit, satire, and ribaldry. Character and real life are caricatured, the fools appearing as incredibly foolish, the learned as incurably pedantic. "Rural persons" and "Vagabonds" were, however, the commoner characters in these books.

For specimens of this early wit and humour the modern reader will consult W. C. Hazlitt's *Shakespeare Jest-Books*, 1st, 2nd, and

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3rd series, 1864; *Howleglass* by F. Ouvry, 1867; W. C. Hazlitt's *National Tales and Legends*, 1862.

### **Riddles and Broad sides.**

Riddles made their reappearance in English literature, although this time they were purely facetious ones. They were often included in the jest-books. Songs and narratives were sold on the streets, thanks to the printing press, but practically all specimens of these early broadsides have perished. A few will be found in J. W. Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 1855-9.

### **Social Criticism.**

In general, the whole tone and atmosphere of the literature we have been considering in this section were medieval; the public as yet had not had their taste affected by the Renaissance. The development of trade in Tudor times, bringing with it a new social class, the wealthy burghers, who had no claims to aristocratic lineage, and the growing luxury of the age were accompanied by a new type of literature which mirrored, particularly in its vices, contemporary life. Luxury and extravagance have always aroused the ire of the moralist, and the moralists of Tudor times were no exception. The coarse, humorous satire on women gives way to more serious attacks upon their clothes, face-paintings, and flirting, quite in the manner of our present school of objectors. Many are found to bemoan the fact that the younger generation no longer are content with the simple life of their fathers. London, we now find from the writers of this day, teems with "confidence men," professional gamblers, sharpers and tricksters of all sorts, ever lying in wait at St. Paul's to dupe youth and innocence, which in turn is only too ready to meet the cheaters half way. Specimens of this literature will again be found in W. C. Hazlitt's *Early English Popular Poetry: A Treatise of a Gallant*, vol. III, p. 147; *Pryde and Abuse*



of *Women now-a-dayes*, vol. IV, p. 227; *Robin Conscience* (c. 1550), vol. III, p. 227; *Vox Populi Vox Dei*, vol. III, p. 207; *The Hye Way to the Spittel House*, vol. IV, p. 17. See also E. Viles and F. J. Furnivall's *Rogues and Vagabonds of Shakespeare's Youth*, 1907, Shakespeare's Library (a re-editing of J. Awdeley's *Fraternitie of Vacabones*, 1561, and Thomas Harman's *A Caveat or Warening for Common Corsetors vulgarely called Vagabones*, 1567.)

### Literature of Knowledge.

A desire for a literature of knowledge was now beginning to grow, and books were written to gratify this demand, although these works are still in part medieval in spirit, with their mixture of truth and legend; not yet wholly clarified by the new learning. Not much of this literature is accessible to modern readers. although some of it has been reprinted by the Early English Text Society. Its range is indicated in part by the titles: *The Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge* (written 1542) by Andrew Boorde; *A Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Helth* (1542) by the same author. The first is a series of studies of the principal kingdoms of Europe; the second, one of the earliest treatises on the cultivation of health composed in English. Other medical treatises by other authors followed soon after.

### Alchemy, Witchcraft, and Other Superstitions.

The diffusion of the new learning throughout England did not at once destroy the superstitions of the age. Chief among these superstitions was the belief that the alchemists would yet find a way to turn base metals into gold or to find an elixir which would give perpetual youth. As for a belief in witchcraft that, too, had many years yet to run. The alchemists and their false claims were exposed, again and 'again, yet these crafty practitioners of plausible chicanery continued to dupe the gullible into paying heavily for experiments in the hope of ultimately



getting something for nothing.<sup>1</sup> Belief in prophecies, omens, and prognostications was also prevalent, but the worst superstition of all (because the most cruel in its effects) was the belief in witches and witchcraft. This latter mental crotchet, unlike faith in alchemy, was more widely held, and even the learned shared it with the common people, for the doctrine of witches was thought to have Biblical authority. The persecutions and burnings of witches are, of course, well-known to all readers, at least as traditional facts.

The first English venturer into the controversy over witches was Reginald Scot who, in 1584, published *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, re-edited, 1886. In this book he sought to show that a belief in witchcraft was unscientific and without basis in fact. It is a thorough work and reflects a mind of keen analytical power and commonsense, capable of exposing fraud and credulity wherever found. The author concludes by saying that witchcraft "is inconcomprehensible to the wise, learned or faithful, a probable matter to children, fools, [and] melancholike persons." At last, in this book, the reader feels in his face the "winds of March blowing" and knows thereby that a new era has begun.

See I. Disraeli's *Amenities of Literature* for *The Discovery of Witchcraft* and Dr. Dee, the occult philosopher; in his *Curiosities of Literature* (1841) for trials and proofs of guilt. For a general view of Tudor England, see H. D. Traill's *Social England*, vol. III, 1895.

See also *Shakespeare Library*: Ed. by E. Viles and F. J. Furnivall, 1907. (Accessible in large libraries.)

### The New English Poetry (Renaissance)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. VIII.

During the reign of Henry VIII the young courtiers of England made the new learning fashionable: that is to say, they aped

<sup>1</sup> See Ben Jonson's play *The Alchemist*. The general principles of selling nothing for something are successfully followed to-day.

the manners and dress of the more elegant court of France, and at the same time devoted themselves to taking up Italian airs and graces. When it became the thing for the dilettanti of the court to try their hands at love lyrics and other verse, they turned sometimes to French but more often to Italian models for their verse-forms and subject-matter, just as they had turned to these countries for their clothes and fencing tricks. In the age of chivalry it had been customary for the knight to compose verse in honour of his lady, so that the custom was not new to England. The difference, at first, came from the bringing in of foreign verse-patterns, particularly that of the sonnet. The compositions of these young gallants of Henry VIII's time were circulated privately in manuscript. They did not regard themselves as professional poets but as accomplished amateurs; they did not, usually, consider publishing their verses.

In 1557 a collection of some of these court lyrics was printed by Richard Tottel in a famous book, known as *Tottel's Miscellany*. The greater number of the poems in this collection were by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, two poets no longer in the land of the living when Tottel issued his compilation.

Sir Thomas Wyatt (c. 1503-1542) had an adventurous career abroad in France, Italy, and Spain on various diplomatic commissions. At home he had hardly less in the way of adventure, suffering imprisonment in the Tower more than once as a consequence of the kaleidoscope of politics, not to mention the reputed youthful affair that he had with Anne Boleyn, later to be the second wife of Henry VIII.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (c. 1517-1547) probably worked with and was influenced by Wyatt, although Howard's poems are placed first in *Tottel's Miscellany*. This fact may be accounted for by Howard's title, the question being one of precedence, even though his rank was a courtesy one bestowed by custom when his father became Duke of Norfolk. He was cousin to Anne Boleyn.



He, too, led an adventurous life as a soldier and courtier, and ultimately his political connections proved fatal to him, for he was beheaded as a result of the intrigues of his father's enemy, the Earl of Hertford, brother to Jane Seymour.

To these two soldiers and courtiers, however, English literature is indebted for the beginnings of the great stream of lyric poetry that was to flow so purely throughout the reign of Elizabeth. One other debt we owe to Surrey, the introduction into England, in his translation of the first two books of Virgil's *Æneid*, of blank verse.

Examples of the work of these two poets may be found in many anthologies, but the following lyrics are recommended to the general reader:

Wyatt: *Forget not yet; The lover compareth his state to a ship in perilous storm tossed on the sea; And wilt thou leave me thus?; The lover complaineth the unkindness of his love; The lover showeth how he is forsaken of such as he sometime enjoyed; To a lady to answer directly with yea or nay; With serving still; Blame not my lute; If in the world there be more woe; A renouncing of love; Of the mean and sure estate.*

Surrey: *Description of Spring; Complaint of a lover rebuked; Description and praise of his love Geraldine; Complaint of the lover disdained; A complaint by night of the lover not beloved; Vow to love faithfully; Complaint of the absence of her lover being upon the sea; A praise of his love; Description of the restless state of a lover; The means to attain happy life; Of the death of Sir T(homas) W(yatt); How no age is content with his own estate.*

Totell's *Miscellany* has been reprinted, edited by E. Arber, 2nd ed., 1903. The same editor published in 1900 *The Surrey and Wyatt Anthology*. Certain of Wyatt's and Surrey's poems will be found in F. E. Schelling's \*\*\* *A Book of Elizabethan Lyrics*, (1895 an excellent anthology for the whole period), and in Norman Ault's *Elizabethan Lyrics*, 1925 (modernized spelling).



Four other contributors to Tottel's *Miscellany* are known by name; the others are anonymous. These four are Nicholas Grimald, Thomas, Lord Vaux, John Heywood, and Edward Somerset. Lord Vaux is most like Wyatt and Surrey, and one of his two lyrics in Tottel's collection is *The aged lover renounceth love*, which the grave-digger in *Hamlet* sings in a corrupted version. John Heywood is better known as a dramatist. As a lyric poet, however, his *All a green willow, willow, willow* (c. 1545) is worth noting, not only for its own sake but because it is the earliest of the Willow songs. (See *Othello*.) The other writers the general reader will find sufficiently represented in anthologies.

The influence of Tottel's *Miscellany* brought other poets before the public, Thomas Tusser, Barnabe Googe, Turberville, and Howell, to mention some. The reader will find little in their work to detain him. They, too, are represented in the anthologies of Elizabethan lyrics to which reference already has been made. The miscellany that succeeded Tottel's was *The Paradise of Daynty Devises* (1576), second edition 1578. The compiler, and himself a contributor, was Richard Edwards (c. 1523-1566), therefore if the edition of 1576 was the first edition, the book was not published until after his death. Many new poets are represented here, together with several contributions by Lord Vaux. The tone of the poems is more serious and didactic than that of the love poems of the first miscellany. As with Tottel's book, *The Paradise* is well represented in the anthologies. Two other miscellanies followed that of Edwards, but English lyric poetry, to judge from these collections, had not yet begun to profit from the examples of Wyatt and Surrey. The time for a great development of the English lyric was, however, not far off.

See also: *A History of English Poetry*: W. J. Courthope, 1904. Vol. II, The Renaissance and the Reformation: Influence of the Court and the Universities. *The Elizabethan Lyric*: J. Erskine. 1903.

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### THOMAS SACKVILLE, LORD BUCKHURST (1536-1608)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. IX.

Sackville's fame as a poet, apart from his tragedy of *Gorboduc* rests upon his \*\* *Induction to A Mirror for Magistrates* (various editions, 1555-1610) and his \**The Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham*<sup>1</sup> contributed to the same volume. The purpose of the printers of *A Mirror for Magistrates* was to continue Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* by gathering together in one volume the stories of famous unfortunate people in history from the period at which *The Fall of Princes* left off to the "present time," i.e., their own day. The vast bulk of *A Mirror for Magistrates* contains little inspiring poetry, but the book was a vast mine of sources for the Elizabethan dramatists, including Shakespeare. Sackville's *Induction*, on the other hand, has been considered the best achievement in English poetry between Chaucer and Spenser. The *Induction* with its description of the underworld derives both from Virgil's *Æneid*, bk. VI, and medieval allegory, yet handled with original power and poetic skill. Further to his credit must be added his influence on Spenser.

A portion of Sackville's *Induction* will be found in *Century Readings for a Course in English Literature*, ed. by J. W. Cunliffe, J. F. A. Pyre, and Karl Young, 1923, and in *English Poetry (1170-1892)*, ed. by J. M. Manly, 1907.

### GEORGE GASCOIGNE (1525?-1577)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. X.

Another poet of the transition period much admired in his day but soon to appear out of date in the busier pageant of the next generation was George Gascoigne. He was a jack-of-all-trades,

<sup>1</sup> See Shakespeare's *Richard III*.



even in literature, his final casually followed profession, for he wrote prose and verse of all kinds and translated plays. It is true that Gascoigne disclaimed the title of professional writer, on the ground that he made no money from literature, nevertheless writing occupied him more continuously than any of his other businesses. He had been, among other things, a soldier in the Low Countries.

Gascoigne was, however, of considerable importance in the history of English literature as a pioneer in many kinds of writing not before attempted in English. He wrote "the first prose story of contemporary life, the first prose comedy, the first tragedy translated from the Italian, the first masque, the first regular satire and the first treatise on poetry in English."<sup>1</sup> As the next generation expressed it he with Turberville "first brake the Ice for our quainter Poets."<sup>2</sup> The best of his love-poetry is in modern anthologies of Elizabethan lyrics, and he is also remembered as one of the poets employed by the Earl of Leicester in composing verses for the masques and pageants held at Kenilworth Castle upon the occasion of Elizabeth's visit.<sup>3</sup>

Recommended lyrics by Gascoigne: *The lullaby of a lover; The looks of a lover enamoured; And if I did, what then?; For that he looked not upon her; Fie, pleasure, fie!* (1572-1575.)

Students of the history of English literary criticism may want to read his *Certayne notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse or ryme in English*. The complete works have been edited by J. W. Cunliffe in the *Cambridge English Classics* series, 1907.

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See also Bibliography under Drama, p. 81.

## EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XI.

With Spenser English poetry climbed again an Alpine peak not scaled since Chaucer's day. Spenser's poetry is the reflection

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. III, chap. X.

<sup>2</sup> R. Tofte, Preface to *The Blazon of Jealousie*, 1615.

<sup>3</sup> See Scott's *Kenilworth*.



of a mind filled with gorgeous imagery, infinite in extent, never repetitious or prolix, and uttered in verse controlled by one of the most sensitive musical ears ever possessed by a poet. His genius burst all the bonds with which the pedantry of his friend, Gabriel Harvey, tried to chain it, or with which Spenser's own fascination for medieval allegory and didactic desires could fetter it.

At Cambridge he fell under the spell of Plato, the one philosopher who has the power to free a poet's spirit. His philosophy freed Spenser's soul, as it did later Shelley's, and once free the academic perversions of the new learning could not cage Spenser again any more than the theories of Godwin could entirely ruin Shelley. Far more concrete are Spenser's images, however, than Shelley's. They are images of beauty in terms of colour, like a succeeding series of tapestries of unearthly, ravishing scenes, woven on looms whose secrets are known only in Fairyland.

Yet the Spenser of *The Faerie Queene* (1st. pt. 1590; 2nd. pt. 1595) did not spring forth full armed in a poet's power, although in early youth signs were not lacking, but they were hardly such as would enable one to guess *The Faerie Queene* was to follow.

The poet's poet, Spenser has been called, for poets recognize more clearly than others the miracle in his wealth of images and perfect ear, in the inexhaustible control of his medium of expression that enables him to write canto after canto of the most difficult stanza-form without ever losing variety or falling into flatness or, in fact, short of anything but the best poetry. But not to poets alone are his miracles visible. He has the same power over the general reader, assuming him to be one caring at all for poetry, a power of setting forth a world in which for once the reader's imagination and senses take full pleasure. It is not, of course, a real world, but possibly an allegory of what the world might be, were we all able to understand the Platonic conception of the spirit of beauty, and had we all imaginations equal to such an understanding; failing these, we can, however, enter into his

dreams as freely as into our own, and see, almost with the same eyes, the beauty he saw, for he has the art perfectly to make concrete for us his images.

The faults of Spenser, and he had faults, for a perfect poet would exist perhaps only in the millennium, or more likely, in heaven, were, in general, the faults of his age, the product of a still continuing confusion caused by the collision between the middle ages and the renaissance. Old and new were jumbled together, protestant and catholic were at war, feudalism was ill of a new disease, international commerce, two great powers were in a life-and-death struggle, England and Spain, and England was torn at home by the bitterness of the religious factions, while even the very language itself was still chaotic. Through this confusion Spenser looked both ways, forward from his Plato of the new learning, backward to the idealized romance of chivalry, seeking beauty yet held in check, too, by his belief that the new protestantism must preach a stern morality, a morality, likewise, that held in abhorrence any precepts emanating from Rome. And in language, also, he turned partly backwards to Chaucer and to archaic-sounding coinages of his own, to earn at length Ben Jonson's rebuke that he "writ no language." It is perhaps sufficient answer to Ben Jonson to say that Spenser's language rarely interferes with the enjoyment of the reader. It is, therefore, a medium appropriate for this poet, just as is his own invented stanza-form.

The general reader will do well to plunge at once into the *Faerie Queene*, leaving the other poems until he has tried his mettle on at least \*\*\* Book I (XII Cantos). For the allegory, a moralized scheme of the Morte d'Arthur, with further allegorical additions, the reader need trouble himself no further than to note carefully Spenser's own account of it in a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh prefixed to the poem. The allegory is not consistent throughout, for the great torrent of the poem sweeps everything



before it. And vast as is the poem in the form he left it, it is unfinished. There were six books, each of twelve cantos still to come, of which only a fragment of the seventh was written.

There are, however, other important poems by Spenser, notably \* *The Shepherd's Calender*, one of his earlier experiments, interesting not only for its being a characteristic example of the fashionable artificial poetry of the renaissance, but likewise for the numerous metres used by Spenser on his way to acquiring the technical mastery later his.

*Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (1591) was written on his return to Ireland from a visit to London. It is an allegorical pastoral in which Spenser sets forth his views about contemporary manners and poetry, complaining particularly of the bad taste which has caused the degradation of courtly love-poetry. He pays, however, elaborate compliments to Elizabeth.

Finally, Spenser gave two perfect lyric poems to our literature: *Epithalamion* and *Prothalamion*. The former celebrates his marriage with Elizabeth Boyle in 1594; the *Prothalamion* was written for Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset. His own love and courtship are celebrated in his sonnet sequence *Amoretti*.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Life*: R. W. Church. (English Men of Letters Series.) 1879. New ed., 1894.
- English Poets*: J. R. Lowell. 1888.
- Works*: Ed. by A. B. Grosart. 1882-4. The standard edition.
- Works*: Globe edition. Revised ed. 1897. A good standard edition.
- \*\*\* *Complete Poetical Works*. Cambridge edition. 1908. The best edition for a general library.
- \* *Minor Poems*: Ed. by Ernest de Sélincourt. 1910.
- Fairie Queene*. 2 vols. Everyman's Library.
- \* *Spenser Anthology*. Ed. by E. Arber.
- The Shepheardes Calender*: Ed. by C. H. Herford. 1895.
- The Genius of Spenser*: W. J. Courthope. 1868. See also vol. II., chap. IX, of his *History of English Poetry*, 1897.
- Lectures on the English Poets*: W. Hazlitt, 1818. "Chaucer and Spenser."
- Imaginary Conversations*: W. S. Landor, 1834. "Essex and Spenser."
- The Stones of Venice*: J. Ruskin, 1851. Vol. III, Appendix.



## FAMOUS ENGLISH POEMS IN SPENSERIAN STANZAS

Thomson's *The Castle of Indolence*; Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*; Keats' *The Eve of St. Agnes*; Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.  
*Platonism in English Poetry*: J. S. Harrison. 1903.

## ROGER ASCHAM (1515-1568)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XIV.

Ascham is interesting as an early critic and as a theorist of education. He was for a time tutor to the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards the queen, and has left in *The Scholemaster* (1570) an account of her learning. The modern reader, not a student of the evolution of English criticism, or of education, will get enough of Ascham from any of the books of extracts containing specimens of English prose. Ascham is sturdily English, advocating in *Toxophilus* (1545), training for all in the use of the old English weapon, the long bow, and opposed the imitation of Italian ways and manners.

These two works have been edited: W. A. Wright, 1904, Cambridge English Classics series.

## ELIZABETHAN LITERARY CRITICISM

For Elizabethan theories of poetry, see F. E. Schelling's *Poetic and Verse Criticism of the Reign of Elizabeth*, 1891.

For examples of criticism in prose, see *Elizabethan Critical Essays*: G. G. Smith, 2 vols., 1904.

## Elizabethan Prose Fiction

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XVI.

Fiction in the medieval world was in general written in verse, but with the development of the language, the passing of the minstrel, the invention of printing, and with the examples of prose fiction in French and Italian literature, together with numerous other complex influences, Elizabethan fiction began to appear in prose, and to have for its purpose entertainment. About the best of medieval stories there clung a didactic intent; not even Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* was free of it, but this work,

nevertheless, was one illustration of what could be done with narrative prose.

The novel, as this literary form was to be known in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, did not as yet appear, although prose narratives and romances of great length were written. Structure was, however, loose and unity often was achieved only by a very slender thread. There was, on the other hand, a great variety of prose fiction ranging from brief character sketches to the long romances, the whole exhibiting no dependence on any one set of models, and defying in its results any precise classification. The subject of Elizabethan prose-fictions is taken up, therefore, by noting certain books and authors likely to attract the general reader, and the intricate web of its history will be largely ignored here.

#### GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

*The Development of the English Novel:* W. L. Cross. 1905.

*The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare:* J. J. Jusserand, 1890.

*The English Novel:* W. Raleigh, 1904.

*English Writers:* H. Morley. Vol. x. 1893.

#### JOHN LYLY (1554?–1606)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XVI.

John Lyly is the first important figure in the development of prose fiction, although he was still tied to the older tradition of making fiction "instructive" (*i.e.*, as a vehicle for teaching manners and the true attitude toward "love"). With Lyly, however, the history of the English novel begins. The works on which his fame principally rests are *Euphues*, the *Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and the second part, *Euphues and his England* (1580). The plot of the first part is exceedingly slender, being in fact no more than an excuse for Lyly's philosophical moralising. Euphues is a young man of Athens, who arrives at Naples, forms a friendship with another young man, Philautus, falls in love with Lucilla, the betrothed of Philautus, and is jilted. That is practi-



cally the whole extent of the plot. In the second part Euphues and his friend Philautus come to England. Euphues is the moralising spectator of his friend's love-affairs, one of which, finally, works out to a happy ending, and Euphues returns to his lonely cell at Silixedra, after praising England and its women.

Any attempt baldly to state the action gives, however, a false impression of these two books. Unconsciously he has foreshadowed the novel of psychological analysis, particularly the analysis of the effects of the passion of love; and the life he portrays is contemporary life.

Lyly's style modern readers may find trying, if they fail to become interested in its fantastic quaintness. It set, however, a fashion in writing and became one of the greatest influences on the development of Elizabethan prose. He used balanced, antithetical sentences, and a host of classical allusions. Further, he drew largely for similes and metaphors on the weird natural history that had descended from the writings of Pliny. The unconscious humour of much of his natural history has an irresistible appeal, although it may be regarded by some as not a very high motive for reading *Euphues*. The humour of the references amused Shakespeare<sup>1</sup> and he may be allowed as authority for such an attitude.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY. (See also Lyly under Drama.)

*Life of John Lyly*: J. D. Wilson. 1905.

*Complete Works*: R. W. Bond. 1902. The standard edition.

*Lectures and Essays*: A. Ainger. 1905. See "Euphuism Past and Present."

*Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama*: J. A. Symonds. New ed.

*English Writers*: H. Morley. Vol. VIII and IX.

### Elizabethan Chroniclers

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XV.

The best known of the Elizabethan chronicles, because of the use of it by Shakespeare in writing his English historical plays, is

<sup>1</sup> See Henry IV, pt. I.



that of Raphael Holinshed (d. 1580) *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1st. ed., 1751; 2nd. ed., 1578).

This history was gathered from many sources, but Holinshed is careful to indicate the origin of all his borrowed materials. It was a very popular work in its day, a fact which probably accounts for its falling under Shakespeare's notice. In Everyman's Library will be found an abridged edition entitled \*\* *Holinshed's Chronicle*, as used in Shakespeare's Plays.

The other historian of Elizabethan times likely to interest the reader is John Stow (1525?–1605), whose *The Survey of London* is also in Everyman's Library.

The edition of Holinshed specially prepared for Shakespearean scholars is *Shakespeare's Holinshed, The Chronicle and the Historical Plays Compared*: W. G. Boswell-Stone, 1907.

### ROBERT GREENE (1560?–1592)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XVI.

Greene was a prolific professional writer, striving desperately to save himself from starvation by following any popular lead in literature that opened before him. Lyly and Sidney each in turn he walked behind, as he did other writers when he thought them on the way to prosperity, yet he was not without merits of his own, particularly in his skill in depicting the characters of women.

One romance of his will interest the general reader because Shakespeare made from it one of his comedies. The romance in question is *Pandosto, or The Triumph of Time* (1588) from which Shakespeare borrowed the plot for *The Winter's Tale*. It is instructive to note the differences in the treatment of the plot by these two, differences that arise principally from Shakespeare's infusion of life into the characters and for his immortal addition of Autolycus.

Greene likewise added a great deal to the literature of contem-

porary life and thereby helped to pave the way for the later realistic novelists. His *Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592) contains the famous denunciation of Shakespeare as "an upstart crow," "an absolute Johannes factotum" and "in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country."

BIBLIOGRAPHY. (See also Greene under Drama.)

Unfortunately little of Greene's work, outside of his plays and poems, is accessible in any but the complete edition.

*Life and Works of Greene*: Ed. by A. B. Grosart. 15 vols. Huth Library, 1881-6. See article on Greene by A. H. Bullen in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. *Groatsworth of Wit* is in G. Saintsbury's *Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets*, 1905.

### SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XVI.

Three works in three different kinds of writing left us by Sir Philip Sidney have a claim on the modern reader: the first is his sonnet sequences \*\* *Astrophel and Stella*, the second, his critical essay, \*\* *An Apologie for Poetry*; the third, his posthumously published romance entitled \* *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*.

The sonnets were probably written between the years 1580 and 1584, (publ. 1591). They narrate the course of his passion for a lady named "Stella," who was Penelope, daughter of Walter Devereux, first Earl of Essex. She married Robert, Lord Rich, and the sonnet sequence is an ideal, poetic courtship for Sidney himself was also happily married. Such sonnet sequences of ideal love were a fashion of the day.<sup>1</sup> Critical opinions have varied concerning the literary merits of these sonnets, but they are worth reading, especially in comparison with Shakespeare's sonnets.

*An Apologie for Poetry* is a delightful essay, in most felicitous and readable prose, and amusing for Sidney's opinion of the professional pre-Shakespearean drama.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Lamb, *Essays of Elia*, *Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney*, and Hazlitt.



The *Arcadia*, a long pastoral romance, derived in part from the *Arcadia* (1504) of the Italian Sannazaro, is a pleasant book to dip into for a half-hour at a time. The artificiality of pastoral literature sometimes becomes irritating, but it has, too, an unquestioned charm even in the practical modern world. Sidney's *Arcadia* is discursive but touched with a poetic beauty which rewards the patient reader.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Life*: J. A. Symonds. English Men of Letters series. 1886.

*Life of Sir Philip Sidney*: Sir Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke. 1652. Ed. by Nowell Smith, 1907.

*Astrophel and Stella*: Ed. by A. Pollard.

*Apologie for Poetry*: Ed. by A. S. Cook.

*The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*: Ed. by E. A. Baker, 1907.

*Works*: Ed. by A. Feuillerat. Cambridge English Classics.

*Last Essays of Elia*: C. Lamb. "Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney."

*The Sonnet in England*: J. A. Noble. 1893.

## THOMAS LODGE (1558?-1625)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XVI.

Lodge is another contemporary writer to whom Shakespeare turned for the basis of a plot. *As You Like It* is founded on Lodge's *Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie* (1590). Shakespeare did to Lodge's story what he did to Greene's *Pandosto*, gave the characters life and added others of his own creating. Lodge's story is a pastoral romance, tinctured throughout the telling by his imitations of Lyly's "euphuistic" style. The narrative has charm, but a great deal less of it than is found beneath the trees of Shakespeare's Forest of Arden.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lodge's *Rosalynde*: Ed. by W. W. Greg. 1908. The Shakespeare Classics. And in Standard English Classics Series. 1910.

See also *As You Like It*: Ed. by Jack R. Crawford. Yale Shakespeare Series. 1919.

*Seventeenth Century Studies*: Sir E. Gosse. 1883. "Lodge."



## THOMAS NASHE (1567-1601)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. XVI.

Nashe is one of the first great English realists, foreshadowing Defoe, having something of his greater successor's grasp of reality and power of close observation. His most important work is *The Unfortunate Traveller, or The Life of Jack Wilton* (1594), a rogue-hero tale of the adventures abroad of an English page. The scene changes from Germany, Holland, to various cities in Italy, finally to close in England. The novel is historical (the first in English), for the events it describes belonged to the preceding generation. Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, Surrey, and Martin Luther all appear as characters. The history is blended with fiction, an original invention on the part of Nashe. The dialogue and descriptions are realistic, all "euphuism" being abandoned; his style has force and naturalness.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*The Unfortunate Traveller, or The Life of Jack Wilton*: Ed. by Sir Edmund Gosse. 1892.

See works by Nashe in *Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets*: G. Saintsbury. 1905. Two other examples of Elizabethan prose narratives are in *English Short Stories from the XVth to the XXth Century*, Everyman's Library. These are: "Sir Simon Eyre" by Thomas Deloney; and "Apolonius and Silla" by Barnabe Riche (See Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*).

A new edition of W. Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure* (1556-7) has been issued in 1927. This is a group of stories, the plots of which were frequently used by the Elizabethan dramatists.

## Elizabethan Translations

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IV, chap. I.

The Elizabethan age produced certain translations which are themselves as great masterpieces as the works from which they were drawn. The reader has only to be reminded of the *Authorized Version* of the *Bible* to understand how great was the spirit of the age in the art of translation, but it is not the purpose of this section to discuss the *King James Bible* (for notes on that work,

see 70), rather shall the reader's attention be drawn to other books which rank as English classics on an equality with works of original genius.

In fact it was through the great translations that the classics and thus the very spirit of the renaissance, finally penetrated the reading public, and it was again through translations that Englishmen came to know more contemporary literatures than their own. Many of these translations were frankly made for the guidance and instruction of the ruling classes; fortunately, their influence has been more far reaching.

The characteristic of the best Elizabethan translations is that they follow the spirit rather than the letter of their originals, and thus have not only the life and vitality of new work, but also better interpret for the English speaking mind the meaning of the foreign authors. Literal translations are always dead things, without soul, and, therefore, often defeat their own purpose by failing to catch the true content. The great Elizabethan translators did not make this pedantic error.<sup>1</sup>

The general reader should begin with Sir Thomas North's (1535-1601) \*\*\* *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (1579), which was based on the French translation of Amyot of Plutarch's *Lives*.<sup>2</sup> As is well known, Shakespeare relied upon this work in writing *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*. Sir Thomas North is, however, slave neither to Amyot nor to Plutarch. He has given us in a noble English prose the great Grecians and Romans metamorphosed into Elizabethan statesmen. His figures live again, not as bundles of biographical data, but as human beings; thus they are alive for the modern reader as well as for the Elizabethan. Further, his style is one of the great examples of English prose writing. Shakespeare himself,

<sup>1</sup> For Elizabethan translations of dramatists, see *The Drama* to 1641.

<sup>2</sup> See also Dryden, p. 145, who made a translation of this work. Dryden's version is in *Everyman's Library*.



in borrowing his plots, did not disdain to borrow some of North's very words and phrases.

Next in interest to North's Plutarch is John Florio's (1553?-1625) translation of the *Essays* of Michel de Montaigne, another book, if we are to judge from *The Tempest*, which was in Shakespeare's library. Florio is an ornate writer, adding much of himself to Montaigne, but that self happens to be worth the addition. His language is sometimes strangely fantastic but always trenchant. He leaves a reader with a memory stored with unforgettable phrases.

Another mine for the Elizabethan dramatists, including Shakespeare, was Arthur Golding's (1536?-1605?) rendering of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1st ed., IV books, 1565; complete ed. 1567). This is an even, flowing, undistinguished narrative, yet adequate for its purpose. Its main importance for us to-day is the use made of it by Golding's contemporaries, who pillaged it endlessly.

George Chapman (1559?-1634) takes high rank among English poets for his translation of seven books of Homer's *Iliad* (1598).<sup>1</sup> A comparison of Chapman's with Pope's translation<sup>2</sup> will reveal the greater beauty and more faithful spirit of the Elizabethan version. Later he completed the *Iliad* (1st complete ed. 1611) and in 1614 published the *Odyssey*. For the modern reader the greatness of Chapman as a poet is in his *Iliad*.

This list by no means makes even a beginning at enumerating the host of Elizabethan translators, but it does list some that are likely to please a general reader. There are, however, many interesting and curious by-paths, Machiavelli's Elizabethan reputation, for example, which may be followed by consulting the bibliographies in some of the literary histories of this period.

<sup>1</sup> See Keats' sonnet On first looking into Chapman's *Homer*, p. 329. Chapman renders Bks. 1, 2, and 7 to 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Pope, p. 177.



## 70 What to Read in English Literature

Unfortunately, numerous works of this period are rarely accessible in libraries of average size and many of them are expensive even in modern reprints.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

North's \*\*\* *Plutarch* is in the Tudor Translations series, ed. by G. Wyndham, 1905. The translations of four lives *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Brutus*, and *Antonius* have been edited by R. H. Carr for the Oxford University Press. This is a useful book for those who wish to compare Shakespeare and North. Another edition, ed. by C. F. Tucker Brooke in the Kings' Classics series.

Florio's \*\*\* *Montaigne* is in the Tudor Translations series, ed. by G. Saintsbury, 6 vols., 1892-3; and ed. by A. R. Waller, 6 vols., 1897. Another edition, 3 vols., in Everyman's Library.

Golding's *Metamorphoses of Ovid* is in the King's Library series, ed. by W. H. D. Rouse, 1904.

Chapman's *Iliad of Homer* is in the Temple Classics series. Another edition is in Morley's *Universal Library*.

### ELIZABETHAN TRANSLATIONS

#### SUPPLEMENTARY SUGGESTIONS

##### Author

##### Translation

Bandello. *Certain Tragical Discourses*: Geoffrey Fenton, 1567. Tudor Translations series, 1898.

Boccaccio. *The Decameron*. Tudor Translations, 1909.

Miguel de Cervantes. \*\*\* *Don Quixote*: Thomas Shelton. 1612. New ed., 1892. Also in Tudor Translations. The best version of this satire.

Machiavelli. \*\*\* *The Prince*. *The History of Florence*. Everyman's Library and in Tudor Translations.

Marco Polo. \*\*\* *Travels*. Everyman's Library.

Consult also further titles in Tudor Translations and Temple Classics series.

### GENERAL

*The Foreign Debt of English Literature*: T. G. Tucker. 1907.

For a general discussion of English translations of classic authors.

*English Literature in its Foreign Relations, 1300-1800*: L. Magnus. 1927.

A survey of the debt of English literature to the beginning of the romantic movement.

*Gesta Romanorum*: transl. by C. Swan. 1924.

### The Authorized Version of the Bible

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. iv, chap. II.

\*\*\* The chapter by Professor A. S. Cook in the *Cambridge History of English Literature* is the best brief discussion of the history and literary value of the King James version of the *Bible*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- \*\* *The Bible and English Prose Style*: A. S. Cook. 1892.  
\* *The Bible as English Literature*: J. H. Gardiner. 1906.  
*The Literary Study of the Bible*: R. G. Moulton. 1899.  
*Revised Version*

## SIR WALTER RALEGH (1552?-1618)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. iv, chap. III.

Sir Walter Raleigh was the friend and admirer of Spenser, who reciprocated both the friendship and the admiration. Mention has already been made of Spenser's explanation of his allegorical purpose in the *Faerie Queene* in the letter addressed to Sir Walter prefixed to the poem; and the first edition of Spenser's work contains also a fine sonnet addressed by Sir Walter to Spenser. "The Shepherd of the Ocean" was Spenser's epithet for his friend. Raleigh had also a wide acquaintance with and many close friendships among the other literary men of his day, and with one in particular, Ben Jonson. Raleigh was a widely read man of great learning, with a free and independent mind, so liberal a thinker in fact as to cause him at one time to be suspected of atheism along with Marlowe and others of the Mermaid Tavern group.

The first of his prose works, published in 1596, contains his immortal account of the fight of the ship *Revenge*, the title of the whole work being *Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isles of the Açores this last sommer*. This is one of the first great stories of an English naval fight.

In 1595 he made an expedition to Guiana in South America and wrote an account of his exploration upon his return home. This narrative, too, makes excellent reading.

Upon the accession of James I he was imprisoned in the Tower on suspicion of being a dangerous character, but was well treated, and allowed, during his imprisonment, to continue his literary labours. The result was his *The History of the World*



which he covered from the Creation to 130 B.C. Raleigh had planned to write a narrative that would treat history as a whole, as a preliminary to telling the history of his own country. Nothing exactly like this history had before appeared in English. King James was, however, displeased with the book because Raleigh had been "too saucy in censuring princes." The book was apparently not banned, in spite of the king's displeasure, although the first two editions appeared anonymously (1st ed. 1614). The book is written in excellent, readable prose. Sir Raleigh's execution in 1618 left the final plan incomplete.

As a writer of lyrics Sir Raleigh also shone. Examples of his lyrics will be found in the Elizabethan anthologies, but the following ones are especially recommended: \*\*\* *A Description of Love; The Silent Lover; The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage; Even Such is Time* (written on the eve of his execution).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Raleigh*: Sir Edmund Gosse. 1886.

*Great Raleigh*: H. de Sélincourt. 1908.

\*\*\* *Sir Walter Raleigh*: Selections from his *Historie of the World*, his *Letters*, etc. Ed. by G. E. Hadow, 1917. (Includes the *Last Fight of the Revenge*.)

#### RICHARD HAKLUYT (c. 1553-1616)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. iv, chaps. iv, v.

The discovery of the New World, leading to voyages and explorations into many unknown seas, together with the search for the Northwest Passage, and the adventurous development of foreign trade, made the sixteenth century memorable for the exploits of British seamen. Further, there was Sir Francis Drake and the great naval victory over the Spanish Armada to fire men's imaginations. A vast literature of sea-voyages arose, but the greatest compiler of all these adventures was Richard Hakluyt. His assemblage of great stores of original materials has preserved for us the records of these stirring times. He



tells us that his inspiration came to him as a schoolboy when he read from the 107th Psalm "they which go down to the sea in ships and occupy the great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

His first experiment is the now extremely rare *Divers Voyages touching the Discoverie of America & the Islands adjacent unto the same* (1582). This was dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney.

In 1589 appeared the first edition of his great work \*\*\* *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*. A second edition, adding more voyages, followed with title page dates of 1598, 1599, and 1600. Not only will the general reader find in this work a fascinating mine of stories, but the growing boy has here adventures to his heart's content.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- \*\*\* *Hakluyt's Voyages of the Elizabethan Seamen*. Select narratives from the Principal Navigations and Voyages. Ed. E. J. Payne. 1900. Contains Hawkins, Frobisher, Drake, Gilbert, Amadas and Barlow, Cavendish, and Raleigh.  
*Hakluyt's Voyages*. Everyman's Library. 8 vols.  
*Hakluyt's Voyages*: ed. by John Masefield. 8 vols. (Four volumes now issued, 1927.)

A very fine edition has been issued by the Hakluyt Society, accessible in large libraries. Other works of Hakluyt have also been reprinted by this society.

*Sir John Hawkins* (d. 1595): J. A. Williamson, 1927.  
 Hawkins is called "the father of the slave trade."

#### The Elizabethan Song-Books and Miscellanies

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IV, chaps. VI, VII, VIII, IX.

After the publication of Tottel's Miscellany (see p. 53) there was at first a pause in the development of English lyric poetry only for it to flower again during the age of Shakespeare and beyond in blossoms often of exquisite and delicate simplicity. The reader has only to be reminded of the lyrics Shakespeare scattered through his plays to understand what the delicacy and beauty of

Elizabethan lyrics were like. Not only are there a host of individual writers, some of whom are of sufficient importance to be referred to separately in succeeding sections of these outlines, but there are also a long list of anonymous lyrics. Not every writer was a professional, many of these lyrists were in fact courtiers, soldiers, and statesmen, who cared nothing about seeing their work in print, writing instead only for their own amusement or to pass their manuscripts about among their friends. These facts account for the great number of anonymous lyrics which ultimately sometimes found their way into song-books and miscellanies, and thus were preserved for us.

The general reader has a large choice of excellent anthologies of these Elizabethan lyrics from which to draw. In addition to the collections of Schelling and Ault, already referred to (see p. 54), the following are recommended:

\*\* *English Madrigal Verse, 1588-1632*. Ed. from the original song-books by E. H. Fellowes. 1920. (Forty-six poets are represented.)

\* *England's Parnassus, or The Choysest Flowers of our Moderne Poets*. Compiled by Robert Allot, 1600. Ed. by Charles Crawford, 1913.

*English Lyric Poetry*: F. I. Carpenter. 1906.

\*\* *English Pastorals*: E. K. Chambers. 1906.

The following partial list is of individual poets well represented in anthologies:

Samuel Daniel (1562-1619); \*\*\* Thomas Campion (1567?-1619); William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585-1649); George Wither (1588-1667); William Browne of Tavistock (1591-1643?); Sir Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke (1554-1628); John Davies of Hereford (1565?-1618); Sir John Davies (1569-1626); Giles Fletcher, the younger (1588?-1623); Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650); \*\* Michael Drayton (1563-1631); \* Nicholas Breton (1545?-1607); Henry Chettle (d. 1607?); \* Sir Edward Dyer (1540?-1607); John Taylor (1580-1653); Chidiock Tichborne (1558?-1586).

Many of the dramatists were, like Shakespeare, also writers of lyrics.

See also bibliography to *Tottel's Miscellany*, p. 55.

### MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631)

Michael Drayton, a not always inspired writer, wrote steadily nevertheless throughout a long life, and in the mass are here and there some gems. The anthologies have plucked some of them from the dross; apart too from these selections, the general reader



will find Drayton a bypath through which it is now and then pleasant to saunter. His hand tried many kinds of writing from Biblical paraphrases, pastoral poetry, love poetry, sonnets, odes, heroical epistles, satires, legends re-told, *To Nymphidia*, a mock heroic poem about Oberon's jealousy, Titania's faithlessness, and her lover Pigwiggen. Finally there is the *Polyolbion*, a work in which he planned to describe the rivers of England and the great events associated with them. Of the odes the reader is advised to try XI, \* *To the Virginian Voyage* and XII, *To the Cambro-Britains and their Harp*, his *Ballad of Agincourt*.

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*Michael Drayton*: O. Elton. A critical study. Rev. ed. 1905.

## JOHN DONNE (1573-1631)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. iv, chap. xi.

In many ways the poet Donne was an original genius. For one thing, he broke entirely away in much of his poetry from the imitation of Italian models and the limited aspects of the love-theme in the Petrarchian school introduced into England by Wyatt and Surrey and followed by nearly all of the Elizabethan lyrists. Donne's strong individuality, mixed as it was at times with a strange, powerful genius, made him unlike his predecessors, who, particularly in their sonnet-sequences and love-poems, had been playing a game. Donne spoke intensely because he had some things he wished to say, some deep emotions to record; poetry was not a plaything to him.

He is recognized to-day as the founder of the "metaphysical" school of poetry, and he had many followers. His religious verses have influenced many; his satires reached even to Pope. His



love-poems are Latin in feeling; toward his mistress there is a blend of ecstasy and anger, no trace of the courtly love ideal of a mistress ideally worshipped from afar. He is at once passionate and cynical.

It is difficult to give the general reader any advice about selections from Donne's poetry. Either the reader will be interested at once, or equally, he will be repelled; it all depends upon one's attitude toward the soul's tragedy of a genius.

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\* *The Life and Letters of John Donne*: Sir Edmund Gosse, 2 vols. 1899.

The reader is strongly recommended to read a life of Donne before turning to his poetry. The story of the adventurer turned minister, and of the conflict of Roman Catholicism with his later Anglicism, make an absorbing study.

*A History of English Poetry*: W. J. Courthope, 1903.

See vol. III, chap. VIII: *The School of Metaphysical Wit*—John Donne.

*Poems*: Ed. by H. J. C. Grierson, 1912.

*Love-Poems*: Ed. by C. E. Norton, 1905.

*Poems*: Ed. by E. K. Chambers, with an introduction by G. Saintsbury, 2 vols. 1896.

The following lyrics are suggested: *Go and catch a falling star*; *The Message*; *Love's Deity*; *The Good-Morrow*; *The Prohibition*; *Lovers' Infiniteness*; *The Canonization*; *The Dream*; *The Expiration*; *The Relic*; *Death, be not proud* (sonnet); *Sweet Love, I do not go*.

See also *The Sea in English Literature—Beowulf to Donne*: A. Treneer. 1927.

#### RICHARD BURTON (1577-1641)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IV, chap. XIII.

Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) is an analysis<sup>1</sup> of a quality of the human mind which may vary from a mere passing mood to a pathological condition. Burton is, in short, attempting a form of medical psychological analysis, but he is combining with this the reflections of a profound and learned mind, so that this strange and powerful book of his is also a personal essay.

The "anatomy" of his subject leads Burton first to state the causes and symptoms of melancholy, such as physical, pathological, the effects of love, of witchcraft, and "immediately from God."

<sup>1</sup> "Anatomy" means "analysis" in seventeenth century English.

There follows the methods of cure, according to each cause involved, together with anecdotes and stories of "melancholics," all related from a vast store of almost universal learning. Under the discussion of "exercise rectified," for example, he has much to say on the technique of fishing. Some of his cures are not so practical as is the prescription of exercise, for he has much faith in the virtues of certain precious stones, but, on the other hand, none at all in exorcism. He devotes the most space to the cure of love-melancholy and religious-melancholy.

Burton's mind, however, reaches far beyond the purposes of a mere medical treatise. He is witty, satirical, as well as informing, not overlooking so far away a subject as the ideal state. Through it all runs a strong vein of English common-sense or mother-wit. He has the fault of his age, copious quotation, but he quotes for a purpose that seems good to him, namely to reinforce his point. He says of his own style that he "writ with as much deliberation as I do usually speak," and it is just this illusion of the author talking to the reader that constitutes Burton's charm to-day. The modern reader will do well to accept Thackeray's advice and keep a copy of Burton by him as "a bedside book."

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- \*\*\* *The Anatomy of Melancholy*: Ed. by A. R. Shilleto, with an introduction by A. H. Bullen. 1893. Abridged edition, 1881.  
*Literary Portraits*: Charles Whibley. 1904. Burton, pp. 251-288.  
 There are numerous references to Burton in the works of the great English writers. See Boswell, *Life of Johnson*; Byron's *Letters and Journals*; Swift and Addison, *Spectator*, No. 1, for influences in some of their essays; Sterne; Samuel Johnson's *Letters*; John Keats; Charles Lamb. The list could be extended, but enough have been mentioned to show to some extent Burton's influence.

#### FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. iv, chap. xiv.

The many aspects of the mind of Francis Bacon offer several choices to the modern reader, according to his own interests.



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There is, for the literary man, Bacon, the essayist; for the philosopher, *The Advancement of Learning*; for the scientist, Bacon's introduction of the inductive methods of thinking; for the political mind, his Parliamentary career and his *New Atlantis*; for the reader of biography, his *Reign of Henry VII*; for the lawyer, his legal writings and decisions as Lord Chancellor. He not only took, as he has said, "all learning for his province," but he left all fields of knowledge under a debt to him for the ideas which he contributed. In the presence of such a mind, criticism can but admire and wonder.

It is precisely in the realm of scientific thought, rather than in actual accomplishment of any new discoveries in this field, that his contribution is of the greatest, for he showed the way that science should follow in order to achieve results: the way of experiment and exact classification of the knowledge obtained by observation and experiment.

As an essayist some have objected that his "counsels civil and moral" are material and worldly, that they leave out of account the value of spiritual ideas. Granting the truth of this charge, the essays, nevertheless, remain a source of pleasure and a stimulation of thought for all who read them. No other prose writer of this period has left us a book which one desires constantly to carry about in one's pocket, to read in at odd moments, to turn to again and again for its penetrating common sense. Such a book is his collection of essays.

\*\*\* *The Essays* appeared in three editions during his lifetime, the first in 1597 containing but ten; the second in 1612 with thirty-four; and the third in 1625 with fifty-eight. The edition of 1597 is an excessively rare book, only two or three copies being known to have survived to to-day. The merit of Bacon's style in the essays is found in his aphorisms and maxims, and in the condensation of his thought into single sentences which live ever after in the reader's mind.



\*\* *The Advancement of Learning* he published in 1605, dedicating it to King James I. This is the first book in which the English language was used as a medium for expounding a philosophy. It is in this book that he outlines his new method of scientific investigation whereby learning may be advanced.

Bacon had planned and in part carried out a much greater work to be called *Instauratio Magna*,<sup>1</sup> which was published in 1620, with the second part called the *Novum Organum* finished. A portion of the third part was published separately in the same year. This was written in Latin, but a reader wishing to read Bacon should include one of the English versions of this work. The whole plan was as follows: 1. The division of the sciences; 2. The New Organum (finished), or directions concerning the interpretation of nature; 3. the phenomena of the universe, or a natural and experimental history for the foundation of philosophy; 4. the ladder of the intellect; 5. the forerunners, or anticipations of the new philosophy; 6. the new philosophy, or active science. The first three parts of the plan are represented by a considerable volume of writing, but for the fourth and fifth he got only as far as the prefaces, while the sixth was to be the work of future ages. The whole was to be written in Latin because Bacon believed that to be the one universal, imperishable language.

*The Novum Organum* is famous for Bacon's exposition of "idols of the mind"—*i.e.*, images or phantoms by which the mind of man is misled. These "idols" are of four classes: idols of the tribe (deceptive tendencies inherent in us); idols of the cave (false images belonging to the individual, which may be overcome by education, habit and accident); idols of the market-place (mistakes arising from the use of language, from mistaking words for things); idols of the theatre (false philosophies and perverted rules of demonstration).

\*\*\* *The New Atlantis* left unfinished at his death, was pub-

<sup>1</sup> Great Restoration.

lished in 1627 with *Silva Silvarum*,<sup>1</sup> a work on natural history. Atlantis was the name of the supposed lost continent, which sank according to legend, beneath the waves of the Atlantic. The legend is told in Plato's *Critias*. *The New Atlantis*, like Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, is an outline for an ideal state. First, this state has had from Saint Bartholomew a gift of the Bible and a very pure revelation of the Christian faith. Founded on this faith, the state is then organized for the thorough and minute study of natural phenomena (science) in order that man may make the best and most complete conquest of environment. This scientific organization is described in the section entitled Solomon's House, breaking off incomplete after the main plan has been explained.

Finally, the modern reader will find his *History of Henry VII* (1622) a prose classic, and further, the first attempt in English at writing history from a philosophical point of view.

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Bacon's style compared with that of Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor.

*Essay on Bacon*: T. B. Macaulay. Edin. Review, July, 1837. Rptd. in *Essays*.

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This essay is unfair and prejudiced in its estimate of Bacon.

\*\*\* *The Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral*: Ed. by S. H. Reynolds. 1890. Completely annotated edition.

Less expensive editions of the *Essays* are in the Riverside Series and in Everyman's Library.

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\*\*\* *The New Atlantis*: Ed. by A. B. Gough. 1915.

\*\* *The Novum Organum*: Ed. by T. Fowler. 2d ed. 1889.

\* *The History of Henry VII*. Selections from this will be found in Bacon, *Selections*, ed. by P. E. and E. F. Matheson in The Clarendon English Series, 1922. Contains also essays on Bacon by Macaulay and S. R. Gardiner.



The following selection of the essays is recommended for a reader who wishes to choose the more famous ones: *Of Truth; Of Revenge; Of Adversity; Of Marriage and Single Life; Of Great Place; Of Seditions and Troubles; Of Atheism; Of Superstition; Of Travel; Of Counsel; Of Wisdom for a Man's Self; Of Innovations; Of Seeming Wise; Of Friendship; Of Suspicion; Of Discourse; Of Riches; Of Prophecies; Of Masques and Triumphs; Of Custom and Education; Of Youth and Age; Of Gardens; Of Studies.*

NOTE: No bibliography is offered on the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy for the reason that the overwhelming contemporary evidence concerning Shakespeare's authorship of his plays is sufficient to make the study of any other theory a mere waste of time.

## Early Writings on Politics and Economics

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. iv, chap. xv.

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## The Drama to 1642

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vols. v, vi.

### HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA

- \*\*\* *The Mediæval Stage:* E. K. Chambers. 2 vols. 1903.  
This is the standard history of the mediæval stage. Full bibliographies.
- \*\*\* *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama:* J. A. Symonds. New ed., 1900.
- \*\*\* *Elizabethan Drama:* F. E. Schelling. 2 vols. 1908.  
The best general work.
- \*\*\* *The Elizabethan Stage:* E. K. Chambers. 4 vols. 1923.  
The standard history and reference work.
- \*\*\* *History of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne:* A. W. Ward. 2d ed. 2 vols. 1899.  
An indispensable reference book for students.
- \*\*\* *British Drama: An Historical Survey from the Beginnings to the Present Time:* Allardyce Nicoll. 1925.  
The best brief history for the general reader.
- \* *Plays of Our Forefathers:* C. M. Gayley. 1907.  
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- A History of Theatrical Art in Ancient and Modern Times:* K. Mantzius. 5 vols., 1903.
- *The English Chronicle Play:* F. E. Schelling, 1902.



\*\*\* *The Court Masque*: E. Welsford. 1927.

\*\*\* *Chief Elizabethan Dramatists*: W. A. Neilson. 1911.  
(Thirty plays exclusive of Shakespeare.)

### The Drama to 1642

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. v, chaps. I, II, III.

The English drama followed in its growth a parallel with the drama of the Continent. The earliest beginnings are found in the elaboration of the ceremony of the Mass, particularly on certain occasions such as at Christmas and Easter, and later, at Corpus Christi. At first, these ceremonies were expanded by the insertion of dialogue between the celebrant and the choir to grow ultimately into the "cycles" of religious plays in which the whole Biblical narrative from the Creation to the Resurrection was dramatized in a series of scenes. As the plays grew more and more elaborate they passed out of the church edifice to the open square, when finally they left the hands of the clergy and were taken over by the trade guilds. The plays were given thereafter on "pageants" or movable waggon which could be taken from one part of the town to another, thus affording opportunity for the whole population to see the representations.

One of the most accessible books containing selections from the early religious plays is J. M. Manly's \*\* *Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama*, 2 vols., new ed., 1900-3. The first volume contains examples of the earliest liturgical drama. Equally useful for the general reader is A. W. Pollard's *English Miracle Plays, Moralities, and Interludes*, 7th ed. revised, 1923, and S. B. Hemingway's *English Nativity Plays*, 1909. The widest variety of selections from early religious plays, moralities, and the beginnings of secular drama is in J. Q. Adams's \*\*\* *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas*, 1924. Everyman's Library contains a volume entitled \*\*\* *Everyman, and Other Miracle Plays*, with a sufficiently representative number of examples for the average reader.

## MORALITY PLAYS

These plays are distinguished from the religious drama in that their purpose was not to bring home the incidents of biblical narrative to the people, but to give instruction in ethics, in how best to live a godly life on earth. The characters in these plays are mainly personifications of abstract ideas, usually Virtues and Vices, and the dramatic action is the conflict between the forces of good and evil struggling for the mastery of man's soul. They are, in short, dramatizations of the medieval allegory, only now the Seven Deadly Sins parade across a stage for us instead of warning us from a tapestry or a vellum manuscript. Examples both of Protestant and of Catholic morality plays have survived.

The most famous of these moralities is \*\*\* *Everyman* (bet. 1509-1630), its reputation resting upon the truly dramatic interest of the story and upon its superior literary form. It is Roman Catholic in spirit. God summons Everyman through Death, the messenger, and Everyman tries to persuade his associates to accompany him, Fellowship, Kindred, Riches, Beauty and others, all of whom make him excuses, until at last he finds that only Good Deeds will follow him through the tomb, after Everyman has been directed by Good Deeds to Knowledge (of his sins) and to Confession.

There is no comic element in *Everyman*, but in other moralities, as the varying types of these plays develop, the comic element, often coarse and crude in form becomes increasingly a factor. Certain of the personifications of the Vices are the mediums for this early expression of the Comic Spirit.

The chief contribution of the morality plays to the progress of the drama was this: the author of a morality play was not dealing with a story already written, as was the case with the composers of dramatic scenes drawn from the Bible, but he had to



invent his own story and give it interest through his capacity to devise appropriate incidents and an application to the point he wished to make. Thus the morality plays were good training in developing the technique of playwriting.

The third type of early drama, the Interlude, will be spoken of in the section on John Heywood.

### EARLY ENGLISH TRAGEDY

Early tragedy began with the translation from the Latin into English of the ten tragedies of Seneca, and from the use of these plays as models came shortly the imitation of the structure and incidents of Senecan tragedy in dramas built upon new themes, or upon themes borrowed from other classical sources. Among the earlier experiments in England in new types were tragi-comedies such as *Apus and Virginia* (1575) and Thomas Preston's *Cambises* (1569). These early plays are still closely linked in thought and technique with the moralities.

The first tragedy on an English theme, although closely imitating the Senecan form, is *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*, by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. It was acted before Elizabeth in 1562, and thus the queen saw the development of the great drama of her reign from its beginnings through some of the productions of Shakespeare. Sir Philip Sidney admired this play,<sup>1</sup> and while the modern reader may not share Sir Philip's admiration, curiosity concerning our first tragedy (it is in blank verse, be it noted) should be for him a strong enough motive for reading it to-day. The story is taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Chronicle*, and the selection of an English subject was a notable point of departure for our drama. A curious feature of *Gorboduc* was the taking over from Italian models of the "dumb show," a pantomimic outline of the action preceding

<sup>1</sup> See his *Apologie for Poetry*.



each act. The "dumb-show" was adopted by many other English dramatists.<sup>1</sup>

Several tragedies followed *Gorboduc*, some of them translated from Italian dramas, such as Gascoigne's *Jocasta*, for one example, but these are of interest only to advanced students of the drama. *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1588), by Thomas Hughes, represents, however, the return to the play founded upon English history, a type Shakespeare was to make so famous. Geoffrey of Monmouth was again the source, as in *Gorboduc*, but Hughes appears to have used Malory as well. The shadow of Seneca, nevertheless, is still cast over Hughes' play.

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*Early Plays from the Italian; Supposes; The Buggbears; Misogonus*: Ed. by R. W. Bond. 1911.

*The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*: J. W. Cunliffe. 1893.

\* *Tragedy*: A. H. Thorndike. 1908.

A general reference work on the whole subject.

#### EARLY ENGLISH COMEDY

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. v, chap. v.

John Heywood (1497?-1580?). Heywood is a writer of comic interludes, a farcical dialogue carried on by a small group of characters, who debate a set theme. Farce of this type is French in origin. In Heywood's *Witty and Witless* the subject of the debate is whether it is better to be a fool or a wise man; in like manner, in *A Play of Love*, the Lover not loved and the Woman loved not loving argue as to who suffers the greater pain. This particular theme is a somewhat more serious one than is usually found in the interlude.

<sup>1</sup> See Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act. III, Sc. ii.

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Heywood is to be commended for having dramatized one of the world's inexhaustible sources of conversation—the weather. In *The Play of the Wether* poor Jupiter who has this variable under his control, consults several characters as to the weather each prefers, but is able to find no solution of the contradictory appeals except to give each character in turn the weather he wants. The *Play called the foure P. P.* is an amusing dialogue in which four characters take part, the palmer, the pardoner, the 'potycary, and the peddler on the advantages and tricks of their trades.

\*\* *The Play of the Wether* is in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*; *The Play called the foure P. P.* is in vol. I of Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama*; *Witty and Witless* is in Tudor Facsimile Texts series, 1909, as is *A Play of Love*. (These two accessible only in large libraries.)

J. Q. Adams's *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas* contains: *The Foure PP*; *A Mery Play*; and *The Play of the Wether*.

The best critical essay on John Heywood is by A. W. Pollard in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*.

After Heywood, regular comedies began to appear, and the interlude, as a distinctive type, ceased to be written.

For a survey of early English comedy, see Gayley's introductory essay in his *Representative English Comedies*.

### NICHOLAS UDALL (1505-1556)

Udall was headmaster of Eton School, where it was the custom for the masters, as in other schools, to prepare or supervise plays for the students. These plays were usually performed at Christmas time, or on some other special occasion. Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* was such a comedy written for his Eton boys to play. It is a free adaptation from Roman comedy, but Anglicized in characters and setting, and Udall added much original character, humour and wit. The play is reprinted in vol. II of Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama* and in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*. An edition in modern spelling



is in the Temple Dramatists series, 1901. It is also in J. Q. Adams's *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas*.

*Gammer Gurton's Needle*, written for performance at Cambridge, by an unknown author,<sup>1</sup> is interesting for its being a purely local and rustic farce, one of the first in the long line of stage tradition which represents the countryman as a subject for jest. Some of the humour is extremely coarse, nevertheless the turmoil in the village caused by the loss of Gammer Gurton's needle, and the contribution of Tyb, the cat, to the general scene will keep the modern reader constantly laughing. The comedy has an Anglo-Saxon vigour, a quality that excuses much.

A text will be found in J. Q. Adams's *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas*.

JOHN LYLY (1554?–1606). See also p. 62.

John Lyly, already famous for the sophisticated wit and artificial style of his *Euphues*,<sup>2</sup> added to his reputation by the writing of several comedies having some of the characteristics of his prose-narrative, yet lighter and more delicate in touch and fancy, accompanied, too, by some of the most charming lyrics of the whole Elizabethan period. One of the daintiest of his comedies is *Alexander and Campaspe* (1584), the legendary story of the prisoner of war, Campaspe, who preferred the love of the artist Apelles to that of Alexander, conqueror of the world. This play contains the beautiful lyric "Cupid and my Campaspe played at cards for kisses."

It was the lightness of touch and polished skill of Lyly in his comedies that prepared the way in part for some of Shakespeare's best work in comedy, notably, for example in the Beatrice-Benedick scenes of *Much Ado About Nothing* and the perfect gossamer of the Forest of Arden scenes in *As You Like It*. Other

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps William Stevenson.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 62.



comedies of Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Twelfth Night*, for instances, reveal the influence of Lyly. See *Shakespeare's Euphuism*: W. L. Rushton, 1871. Shakespeare also, upon occasion, parodied Euphuism.

The following comedies of Lyly are recommended: \*\*\* *Alexander and Campaspe*, in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies* in Adams's *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas*, and Manly's *Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama*; \*\*\* *Endimion*, (1591) in *Minor Elizabethan Drama*, vol. II, Everyman's Library. The standard edition of all Lyly's works is edited by R. W. Bond, 3 vols., 1902.

*John Lyly*: J. D. Wilson. 1905.

### GEORGE PEELE (1558?-1597?)

There are two dramatic writings of George Peele capable of pleasing the general reader, one \*\* *The Arraignment of Paris*, (1584), a pastoral, delightful for the charm of its verse; the other, \* *The Old Wives Tale* (1595), a burlesque of contemporary romantic plays. The latter, it is true, is of more importance to a student of the history of our drama, but no one will complain too much after reading both these works. [*The Arraignment of Paris* is available in *Works*, edited by A. H. Bullen, 2 vols., 1888 and *The Old Wives Tale* in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*, and in *Minor Elizabethan Drama*, vol. II, Everyman's Library. *The Arraignment of Paris* contains the beautiful lyric "Fair and fair, and twice so fair."

### ROBERT GREENE (1558-1592)

Greene had considerable powers that marked his work in drama as an advance in the art of the stage. These powers were principally his ability in the construction of intricate plots, in which, however, there is no confusion, and in the portrayal of

human feeling. The reading of some of his plays is necessary to complete one's knowledge of the Pre-Shakespearean drama. His \*\* *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1594) and *James the Fourth* (1598) are in *Minor Elizabethan Drama*, Everyman's Library. *James the Fourth* is also in Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama*, vol. II. *The Tragical Reign of Selinus*, ed. by A. B. Grosart, in *Temple Dramatists*, has been attributed to Greene, but the attribution is now regarded as doubtful. *George à Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield* (1599), is in J. Q. Adams's *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas*. *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, ed. by J. C. Collins, 1905, is the standard reader's edition. Another edition in the Mermaid Series, 1909. See essay on Greene in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*.

NOTE: Plays by Thomas Lodge and Thomas Nashe are not listed here for the reason that they have interest only for the specialist. The former is chiefly known for his collaboration with Greene; the latter, for his collaboration with Marlowe in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*.

### CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1593)

Marlowe is not only a great poet and (within certain limits) a great dramatist to be read for his own sake, but as the man who was the forerunner of Shakespeare in tragedy and the writer of a flowing blank verse capable of sustaining and expressing dramatic emotion, he has, naturally, a primary importance for a student of the drama. To Lyly and to Marlowe Shakespeare owed more than he did to any others of his contemporaries.

*Hero and Leander* (1593; ptd. 1598), an unfinished poem, later completed by Chapman, is the measure of Marlowe as a poet, together with his beautiful lyric "Come live with me and be my love."<sup>1</sup> The qualities of *Hero and Leander* are the clear beauty of its images, and its poetic passion in dealing with the theme of love.

<sup>1</sup> Sometimes entitled *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*.



In his drama the modern reader will find \*\*\* *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (ptd. 1604) the most interesting. Here is a theme, man's struggle for the truth that shall give him limitless power, seeking this truth even at the cost of his immortal soul, that is a universal epitome of life. The play, it is true, is marred by crudities in comic relief and by a failure to construct a story adequate to the greatness of the theme, nevertheless, there are few plays outside of Shakespeare's so compelling for the reader in its final scene of tragic intensity. It has a further interest, of course, in the fact that Goethe chose this theme for his great philosophical drama of *Faust*.

Next to *Faustus* stands Marlowe's \*\* *Edward II*, not because it has the universal interest of *Faustus*, but because it is a great advance, as an example of dramatic technique, over any chronicle-history play before its day. It is rich in characterization and in dramatic episodes, and is, therefore, readable, and in studying it one feels that one is standing very close to a model that inspired Shakespeare in his dramas of English history.

Finally, the general reader is urged to compare \* *The Jew of Malta* with the portrait of Shylock in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. This comparison will show, perhaps too unfairly, if no other Marlowe is read, Marlowe's limitations as a dramatist (his violent crudity and undisciplined imagination), at the same time as it will reveal how far Shakespeare out-topped his inspirer.

The best edition of Marlowe's plays is that edited by C. F. Tucker Brooke, 1910. Another edition is in Everyman's Library.

For essays on and studies of Marlowe, see W. Hazlitt's *Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, 1821; chap. I of A. C. Swinburne's *A Study of Shakespeare*, new ed. 1908; and J. A. Symonds's *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama*, new ed. 1900.

Goethe's *Faust*. Parts I and II, trans. by Bayard Taylor, the best version in English. 2 vols.

Another edition in Everyman's Library.



## THOMAS KYD (1558?-1594)

Kyd is the third of the dramatists whose work is closely related to that of Shakespeare. It was Kyd who took the ghost and the motive of revenge from Senecan tragedy as the basis of the action in drama and thus created a type of Elizabethan tragedy of which Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is the one perfect example. Some scholars believe the association of idea between Kyd and Shakespeare for the revenge-tragedy arose when Shakespeare was called upon to re-write an older *Hamlet* which these scholars assume was Kyd's. Whether there was an older play about young Prince Hamlet, or whether Kyd was the author of it are questions the general reader may well leave to the scholars to debate. What will interest the reader, however, is Kyd's \*\*\* *The Spanish Tragedie*, a crude tragic melodrama full of power and vigour of action and line. And the play serves as a model for the revenge-type which Shakespeare transmuted into *Hamlet*. *The Spanish Tragedie* has a ghost, a revenge which is slowly carried out, and a play within a play, elements, of course, used again by Shakespeare in his *Hamlet*. Other plays by Kyd, or other plays attributed to Kyd will not detain the general reader. \*\*\* *The Spanish Tragedie* is accessible in many texts, notably the following: Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama*, vol. II; *The Chief British Dramatists*, ed. by Brander Matthews and P. R. Lieder, 1924; ed. by J. Schick in *Temple Dramatists*, 1898.

The standard edition of Kyd is *The Works of Thomas Kyd*, ed. by F. S. Boas, 1901.

The relation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to the influence of Kyd is discussed in J. W. Cunliffe's *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*, 1893. See also references under Shakespeare: *Hamlet*.

## SHAKESPEARE: GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

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*Johnson on Shakespeare, Essays and Notes*: Ed. W. Raleigh. 1908.

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\*\*\* *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*: W. Hazlitt. 1817. Everyman's Library.

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*Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth.*

\*\* *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*: S. A. Brooke. 1905, new ed., 1919.

*Midsummer Night's Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Richard II and III, Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, Macbeth, Coriolanus, Winter's Tale, Tempest.*

\*\* *On Ten More Plays of Shakespeare*: S. A. Brooke, 1913.

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

This is not the place in which to write another eulogy of Shakespeare. For the last one hundred and sixty years the library shelves have been crammed with ever appearing volumes of praise, until the list of books about Shakespeare has reached a bewildering number before the magnitude of which the average reader stands aghast not knowing what to choose. These notes, therefore, aim at no more than an attempt to guide the reader in his preliminary selections.

Ultimately, the general reader will work his way through all of Shakespeare's plays, and his curiosity then will probably carry him far enough to read some of the plays that have been attributed to Shakespeare at one time or another, but of which the authorship is still uncertain.

His plays will be listed here in the chronological order determined by Professor C. F. Tucker Brooke of Yale, and the principal plays, with which the reader will wish to begin, will be indicated by the usual stars. The reader is advised to take up his reading chronologically in order that he may trace for him-



self Shakespeare's development as a dramatic artist. The precise dates of composition of the earliest plays are uncertain, for evidence is lacking to show that any of his written work was in existence before 1592; on the other hand, by 1597 there was a considerable number of plays finished, which showed an artistic development that it is difficult to believe could have been accomplished in the space of five years. The year 1588, just after he arrived in London from Stratford, is usually taken, therefore, as the date at which he began his dramatic composition.

The texts of the plays recommended are *The Yale Shakespeare* series, issued by the Yale University Press. Bibliographies prepared from *The Yale Shakespeare* and *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, with some additions by the compiler.

\* *Comedy of Errors* (Between 1588 and 1594?, 1st ptd. 1623)

This is the only play of his that is taken from a classical dramatist, although other plays have sources from other forms of classical literature. The source is the *Menæchmi* of Plautus. Already in this play he shows his usual independence, adding some characters and discarding others. It is a comedy of intrigue and mistaken identities.

Collateral reading: S. T. Coleridge, *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare*, 1818, IV, "Notes on Some Other Plays of Shakespeare"; J. C. Collins, *Studies in Shakespeare*, 1904. Essay I, "Shakespeare as a Classical Scholar." W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 253 ff.  
*Introductions to Shakespeare's Plays*, by Harley Granville-Barker, about 6 vols. (1928, in course of publication.)

\* *Love's Labour's Lost* (1590?, 1st ptd. 1598)

The source of this play is unknown, and the plot may therefore be original with Shakespeare, although he usually took his story or a suggestion for a story from the work of others. The influence of Lyly is apparent in this play; it is in fact a burlesque of contemporary types and of contemporary "euphuistic" conversation.



Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 225 ff.  
H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed. 1904.

\* *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1591?, 1st ptd. 1623)

This is a dramatized romance based upon an episode in Montemayor's Spanish novel *Diana Enamorada* (1542). Translations in English and French were extant in Shakespeare's day. Shakespeare, as usual, made himself responsible for vivifying the characters. Note especially the character of Julia.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library, pp. 203-205; Lewis Lewes, *The Women of Shakespeare*, 1895, pp. 137-140.

*Henry VI*, Pts. II and III (1592?, 1st ptd. 1623)

These two historical plays derive ultimately from Holinshed's *Chronicle*, but are re-workings of two older plays *The First Part of the Contention between the two Noble Houses of York and Lancaster*, and *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York*. Many scholars have held that the two parts of *Henry VI*, II and III, are in part the work of other collaborators, but that Shakespeare also had a large share in writing them seems certain. In any event, the importance of these plays is that, whatever share Shakespeare had in them, he was beginning his experiment in dramatizing history.

Collateral reading: C. F. Tucker Brooke, *The Authorship of the First and Second Parts of King Henry the Sixth*, 1912.

Novels on this period: Bulwer-Lytton, *The Last of the Barons*, 1843, see p. 271.  
R. L. Stevenson, *The Black Arrow*, 1888.

*Titus Andronicus* (1593?, 1st ptd. 1594)

The source of this play is unknown, although it is probably the revision of an older drama on the same subject. The plot has no historical basis in fact. The play is so crude in its violence and letting of blood that many critics believe Shakespeare's share in it to have been slight or nonexistent. It is, however,

listed in 1598 by Meres as an authentic Shakespearean play. The violence and horror of some of the incidents are sometimes attributed to the influence of Marlowe.

Collateral reading: Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., "Doubtful Plays of Shakespear," p. 256 ff.

J. C. Collins, *Studies in Shakespeare*, 1904, pp. 96-120; H. D. Sykes, *Sidelights on Shakespeare*, 1919 (against Shakespearian authorship); J. M. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Study of the Shakespeare Canon*, 1924.

### \*\*\* *Richard III* (1594?, 1st ptd. 1597)

With the tragedy of *Richard III* the Shakespeare we know begins to emerge. The source is in Holinshed's *Chronicle*, although there were older plays on the same subject. But the evidence shows that in this tragedy Shakespeare was working in his own interpretation of history from the facts learned from Holinshed. Richard is the portrait of a villain whose baseness is wholly unrelieved with any softer qualities. It is a powerful portrait that Shakespeare draws, crude still, it is true, but nevertheless a tragic figure, as is that of Margaret, the defiant sufferer from Richard's villainy. The play, taken as a whole, has deserved its popularity with readers of Shakespeare.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library ed. p. 73 ff; J. R. Lowell, *Last Literary Essays*, "Shakespeare's Richard III," 1883; Stopford A. Brooke, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, 1905, chap. IV; E. K. Chambers, *Shakespeare: a Survey*, 1925, pp. 10-20.

H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1908.

### \*\* *King John* (1595-6?, 1st ptd. 1623)

This chronicle-history play appears to have been founded on an older anonymous play in two parts entitled *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England* (1591). In this play Shakespeare kept more of his original than was his usual custom, but, characteristically, heightened and sharpened his borrowings, filling out again and making alive the characters, especially in the case of Constance, the King, Philip, and others. A comparison



of this play with the original is most enlightening for revealing Shakespeare's methods of working and skill in making alterations.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed. p. 186; ff. S. A. Brooke, *Ten More Plays of Shakespeare*, 1913.

\*\*\* *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594?, 1st ptd. 1600)

With this comedy Shakespeare reveals for the first time his delicacy and lightness of touch in handling the most difficult and fragile fancies. Again there are no known sources, except that the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta is an incident in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*; and North's *Plutarch* contains a *Life of Theseus*; the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, so humorously portrayed by Bottom and his company of amateur actors, is in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* and Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Puck is the traditional mischief-loving Robin Goodfellow of folk-lore, Oberon is the name (Auberon) of the king of the fairies in the French medieval romance *Huon of Bordeaux*, but this assembly of "unconsidered trifles" is hardly to be dignified by the name of source. The charm and lyric sweetness of the whole comedy are Shakespeare's own, as is his piecing together of his story. It is Shakespeare who has invented in this comedy our English conception of the fairies. In medieval times they were something dangerous, or at best, mischief making creatures.

Collateral reading: Frank Sidgwick, *Sources and Analogues of "A Midsummer Night's Dream,"* 1908. Shakespeare Classics series. Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 97 ff.  
H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1895.

\*\* *Richard II* (1595?, 1st ptd. 1597)

This play, founded on Holinshed's *Chronicle*, shows so unmistakably the influence of Marlowe as to lead some critics to believe that it is not all by Shakespeare, but that Marlowe's hand is also to be found in it. Certainly, the play seems to have been sug-



gested by Marlowe's *Edward II*. Nothing more certain can be said of it. As in Marlowe's *Edward II* and in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, is the almost total absence of the comic element. Not to be gainsaid, however, are the passages of splendid poetry, slightly rhetorical perhaps, of the king's speeches. These, one feels, (although critics warn us such feelings are dangerous), are Shakespeare the poet. Further, the king's death has a note of pathos beyond Marlowe's best in this kind.

Collateral reading: Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 137 ff.

\*\*\* *Romeo and Juliet* (1595?, 1st ptd. 1597)

This most moving tragedy of youth Shakespeare dramatized from Arthur Brooke's poem of *Romeus and Juliet* (1562), but into his characters of the two star-crossed lovers he seems to have poured all the lyric intensity of passionate emotion derived from his own knowledge of youth. Here is unquestionably the great Shakespeare who makes of a borrowed outline the merest framework on which to overlay his genius. Brooke's poem, it may be said in passing, is derived from an Italian story through a French source. There is also a prose version in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1567). Apart from all questions of source, Shakespeare has written in *Romeo and Juliet* the greatest tragedy on the theme of romantic love that English dramatic literature possesses.

Collateral reading: S. T. Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare*, 1849, Everyman's Library; S. A. Brooke, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, 1905; Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 104 ff.

Arthur Brooke's *Poem of Romeus and Juliet*, ed. by J. J. Munro, Shakespeare Classics series, 1907.

H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1871.

\*\*\* *The Merchant of Venice* (1596?, 1st ptd. 1600)

This comedy was compounded out of three, possibly four, separate and distinct stories. First, there is the story of the usurer and the bond that called for a pound of flesh if forfeited.

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This story came originally from the Italian of Giovanni Fiorentino in a collection of tales written in 1378 and published in 1565. No English translation contemporary with Shakespeare is known. Second, the story of the three caskets comes from the *Gesta Romanorum*, a collection of tales known in England from the thirteenth century. The third story is that of the elopement of Jessica, Shylock's daughter, the source of which is unknown; and the fourth is the episode of the rings (Acts IV and V). Finally, Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* probably influenced Shakespeare in his choice of theme.

All these threads of plot are skillfully woven into a consistent story through which pass two great creations of Shakespeare's genius in the psychology of character delineation, the figures of Shylock and Portia. The latter is Shakespeare's first complete portrait of a charming, intellectual woman, although he has hinted at her in earlier plays.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817. Everyman's Library ed., p. 206 ff; S. A. Brooke, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, 1905, pp. 127-154.

H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1888.

### \* *The Taming of the Shrew* (1596. 1st ptd. 1623)

This comedy was adapted by Shakespeare with very little original work of his own from a play entitled *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594). Parts of the Induction must be his, *i.e.*, the Warwickshire references, the additions to the character of Petruchio, and the insertion of the character of Bianca as a contrast to her shrewish sister. He has also touched with life the figure of Katherine herself, but beyond what has been here noted, little is his. The play acts well, which was probably Shakespeare's reason for revising it, but it is not one of the most enjoyable to read.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817. Everyman's Library, p. 239, ff.



\*\*\* *Henry IV*, Pt. I (1597?, 1st ptd. 1598)

This is an adaptation from *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*, with reference, too, to Holinshed, but in the re-working Shakespeare performed one of the greatest of his miracles, the creation of the character of Sir John Falstaff. No where else has Shakespeare risen to greater heights of characterization and the figure of the fat knight may well stand as his masterpiece of comic portraiture. Falstaff is accompanied by a crew worthy of him, each individualized by Shakespeare's magic, while contrasted with these genii of the Comic Spirit, is the romantic, tragic figure of young Harry Hotspur, together with a group of able politicians manipulating the web of statecraft. Prince Hal is less likable to a modern reader than his impulsive opponent Hotspur, but our dislike of him is a tribute to Shakespeare's skill in making him seem a real person.

Collateral reading: Maurice Morgann, *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*, 1777; W. Hazlitt, *The Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library ed., p. 145 ff., Stopford A. Brooke, *Ten More Plays of Shakespeare*, 1913.

\*\* *Henry IV*, Pt. II (1598?, 1st ptd. 1600)

To appreciate Falstaff to the full, the second part of *Henry IV*, which is really a continuation of the first, should be read. Holinshed is, once more, the source for the historical facts which matter little to the reader, however, who has Falstaff before him, only a little less himself than he was in Part I. It would be too much to expect that perfection should twice be reached by an artist, hence this Falstaff has shrunk the least trifle in comparison with his perfect self in the first part. But the shrinkage is so slight that we can still remain most thankful for meeting him again.

Collateral reading: \*\*\* A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 1909, "The Rejection of Falstaff." See also preceding bibliography.



\*\*\* *Henry V* (1599?, 1st ptd. 1600)

Prince Hal has now grown up and become the great King Henry who conquered France at Agincourt. Falstaff is dead, as we learn to our sorrow, but some of his old companions accompany the hero-king to France, and we meet another comic figure in Fluellen, that master of the strategic and tactical theory of war. In this play Shakespeare has poured forth his pride in his own country. It is the patriotic chant of the Elizabethan age. The facts of Holinshed<sup>1</sup> have been fused into a national anthem of great beauty. And the Chorus gives us all some very instructive suggestions on how to use our own imaginations.

Collateral reading: Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library, ed., p. 156 ff.

T. Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. 1840. (See "The Hero as Poet"); J. W. Cunliffe, *Shakesperian Studies*, 1916, pp. 313-331.

\* *Henry VI*, Pt. I (1599?, 1st ptd. 1623)

The first part of *Henry VI* seems to have even less of Shakespeare in it than the other two plays of this trilogy. The source is Holinshed through either an older play, or a collaboration in preparing this version. The principal evidence of Shakespeare's connection with it is that his fellow-players, Heminge and Condell, included it in the first folio.

Collateral reading: See under *Henry VI*, Pts. II and III.

\*\*\* *Julius Caesar* (1599?, 1st ptd. 1623)

This is the first of Shakespeare's plays of Roman history, based upon North's<sup>1</sup> translation of Plutarch's *Lives* (1579). With his characters of Brutus and Mark Antony, Shakespeare is again walking on the heights. Structurally, the play is loose, breaking sharply in the middle with the assassination of Cæsar, but is

<sup>1</sup> A few suggestions seem to have been found in *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (1594).

none the less great for all that. The theme of the conflict of friendship with patriotism (Brutus and Cæsar) together with that of ambition with friendship and patriotism (Cæsar, Antony, and the conspirators), is one of universal appeal. As for Brutus, he is indeed "the noblest Roman of them all."

Collateral reading: S. T. Coleridge, *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare*, Everyman's Library; W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library, p. 25 ff.; M. W. MacCallum, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays and Their Background*, 1910; C. F. Tucker Brooke, *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, vol. I, 1909. (The texts of Plutarch used by Shakespeare as sources.)

\* *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1599-1600?, 1st ptd. 1602)

Tradition has it that this comedy was written to order at the command of Queen Elizabeth, who had expressed a desire to see "the fat knight," Sir John Falstaff, in love.<sup>1</sup> Again we are thankful for Falstaff, even though he is not here the supreme embodiment of the Comic Spirit that he is in *Henry IV*, Pt. I. The play is, however, a neatly constructed merry farce, and the resurrection of Falstaff is more vividly done than we might dare to hope considering the artistic perils of such a revocation. We know nothing definite about any sources for this play other than the tradition of the queen's suggestion. The *Tale of Two Lovers of Pisa* has been mentioned as a possible source, but evidence for the suggestion is lacking.

Collateral reading: Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*. Everyman's Library ed., p. 250 ff; W. H. Ainsworth, *Windsor Castle*, 1843 (a historical novel); Mary Cowden Clarke, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*, in vol. I of the Everyman's Library edition.

\*\*\* *Much Ado About Nothing* (1600?, 1st ptd. 1600)

The less important plot in this comedy, that of Hero and Claudio, comes from a story by Bandello (1480-1561), the inci-

<sup>1</sup> See, however, *Henry IV*, Pt. II, Epilogue: "If you be not too much cloy'd with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it."



dent of the trick played upon Hero appearing in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, translated by Sir John Harington, 1591. There is also a record of a lost play entitled *Benedicke and Betteris*. The really important persons in this play are, in the form they have reached us, Shakespeare's own creation. Beatrice completes the portrait of the charming, civilized intellectual woman, a portrait first sketched by Shakespeare in drawing the Portia of *The Merchant of Venice*. We shall not see her like again until we come to the novels of George Meredith. Benedick, too, is a triumph of high comedy, as is Dogberry and his crew, of low comedy.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 229 ff.; Mrs. Anna Jameson, *Characteristics of Women*, 1833; Helena Faucit, Lady Martin, *On Some of Shakespear's Female Characters* (1885). Letter no. VIII, "Beatrice," 7th ed. 1904.  
H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1899.

\*\*\* *As You Like It* (1600?, 1st ptd. 1623)

If *Much Ado* is Shakespeare's greatest comedy of civilized human beings, *As You Like It* is certainly his greatest comedy of the romance of the joy of living. The stiff, euphuistic novel of Thomas Lodge, *Rosalynde*, has been altered by a witty poet into something so charming that it defies definition in words. The Forest of Arden is more than a Fairyland, it is the earthly paradise itself, peopled by a handful of humanity who become permanent inhabitants of our happiest imaginations. Rosalind the most delightful of young girls, not so intellectual as Beatrice, but none the less fascinating in her fresh girlishness, the melancholy Jaques, excellent philosophizer of the obvious, Touchstone, talking the supreme wisdom of the fool, Audrey—but why go on? We know the Forest of Arden and its people better than we know our own gardens and neighbours. The ending is hurried, some have called it patched, but the spell of the Forest is an illusive one, and perhaps it was safer not to break the spell with a logical conclusion.



Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817. Everyman's Library, p. 234 ff.; Helena Faucit, Lady Martin, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, 7th ed. 1904, p. 227 ff.; A. S. Brooke, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, 1904, p. 155 ff.  
H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1890.

\*\*\* *Twelfth Night* (1601?, 1st ptd. 1623)

This comedy is probably based on Barnabe Riche's *Apolonius and Silla*, a story which he adapted from the French of Belleforest, and which in turn Belleforest had translated from a novel by Bandello. But as Shakespeare now approaches the maturity of his genius, his sources have only a slight interest for the general reader because his plays are now so clearly the expression of his own powers and so superior to the borrowed matter that the germ of his idea, whatever it may have been, sinks to insignificance before his own re-creation. Viola is another in the gallery of Shakespeare's charming young women, no two of whom are alike, by the way, except that in each there seems to be the quintessence of the feminine spirit. Besides Viola, there is Malvolio, that amazing study of an egoist sick with his own self-love. Not inferior as characterizations are the lesser figures of Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and Feste, the clown. When all is said, however, Malvolio could have been drawn by no other than a penetrating and philosophic critic of human nature.

Collateral reading: Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 195 ff.; Morton Luce, *Rich's "Apolonius and Silla," an Original of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night,"* 1912, Shakespeare Classics series. Another ed., in Everyman's Library, of *Apolonius and Silla* in *English Short Stories from the XVth to the XXth Century*.  
H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1901.

\*\*\* *Hamlet* (1601?, 1st ptd. 1603)

Of the possible relation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to an earlier play by Thomas Kyd something has been said in the note on *The Spanish Tragedy*. The story comes from a Danish legend told by Saxo Grammaticus and retold in French by Belleforest in his

*Histoires Tragiques*. The character of Hamlet, however, is what makes Shakespeare's play, and this character is his own creation. Shakespeare, having reached the pinnacle in comedy, now scales a greater height in tragedy. Here is the tragedy of a mind civilized and educated beyond the life and circumstances in which it finds itself, having to use the delicate instrument of its intellect in devising for revenge a sordid murder. That such a mind stumbles when confronted with this awful problem is not surprising. The miracle is that Shakespeare can make dramatic this story of delayed action. The miracle is wrought through our interest in Hamlet, the man. Let no reader waste his time over fine spun theories about the precise state of Hamlet's mind, whether he feigned madness, or was unbalanced by his problem. The play, when read without cluttering one's head with theories, speaks for itself.

Collateral reading: Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 79 ff.; S. T. Coleridge, *Lectures on Shakespeare, etc.*, Everyman's Library; John Corbin, *The Elizabethan Hamlet*, 1895; \*\*\* A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1904, Lectures III and IV; C. M. Lewis, *The Genesis of Hamlet*, 1907; S. A. Brooke, *Ten More Plays of Shakespeare*, 1913, chap. IV; J. Fitzgerald, *The Sources of the Hamlet Tragedy*, 1909.

H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 2 vols., 1877.

\* *Troilus and Cressida* (1602?, 1st ptd. 1603)

There has been much argument among critics about this play. It is a sharp, stinging satire not only on human nature (a satire that is unlike Shakespeare's usual mood of humorous, tolerant criticism), but it also offends the critics by its lack of reverence for the heroes of Homer, Greek or Trojan. Some have thought it an attack, by way of ridicule upon the classicism of Ben Jonson. The really amazing thing about the play is its inferiority as a work of art after *Hamlet* and the great comedies. There was no particular reason why Shakespeare should have felt reverence for the Homeric heroes, for he had probably met them only in the outlandish garb of medieval romance. It is true he had access to



Chapman's *Homer* (1598). On the other hand, Cressida was already in literary and popular tradition a wanton, and her name a byword for a frail woman, so that the treatment of her story was more or less prescribed for him. It is not surprising that he approached the theme with little awe, but it is surprising that in this period of his career, he did not make a better play out of it. His real sin is that *Troilus and Cressida* is one of his least interesting plays, written at a time when more could be expected of him. Shakespeare went to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and to Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, more than enough inspiration for him, but for some unknown reason his artistic understanding and sympathy were not aroused.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library, p. 64 ff.

\* *Measure for Measure* (1603?, 1st ptd. 1623)

Another of Shakespeare's plays about which there has been a warm debate is *Measure for Measure*. Modern readers do not like it, finding its theme "unpleasant" in the full sense of the word as used by Mr. George Bernard Shaw.<sup>1</sup> The play has moments of great power, but again the treatment of character seems to have resulted from a point of view which is not Shakespeare's usual one. Perhaps Hazlitt's dictum best sums up this play: it is "as full of genius as it is of wisdom. Yet there is an original sin in the nature of the subject, which prevents us from taking a cordial interest in it." The play is a revision of materials from older plays.

The source is probably George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (1578), a play in two parts, and he derived his plot from a story by the Italian writer Cinthio (1565).

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library, p. 245 ff.; S. T. Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures upon Shakespeare*, Everyman's Library; Mrs. Anna Jameson, *Characteristics of Shakespeare's Women*, 1833; Walter Pater, *Appreciations*, 1889—"Measure for Measure."

<sup>1</sup> See the title *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant*, by George Bernard Shaw.



\* *All's Well that Ends Well* (1596-1606?, 1st ptd. 1623)

Some critics believe this to be an early play of Shakespeare's, others would place it later. The story comes from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, probably via Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, 1566. It is, once more, a comedy not very pleasing to the modern reader, in spite of such character satire as is found in the portrayal of Parolles, and the romantic, serious treatment of the plot. Hazlitt admired it, calling it "one of the most pleasing of our author's comedies." Few to-day will agree with him.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library, p. 220, ff.

\*\*\* *Othello* (1604?, 1st ptd. 1622)

Assuming that the last three plays are correctly arranged chronologically, the reader might begin to wonder what had happened to Shakespeare after writing *Hamlet*. It is only fair to remind the reader, however, that the lessening of his genius is apparent more to our changed modern taste than it is to a basis in fact. We prefer some of the preceding plays to the last three. *Othello* once more restores the balance and renews our confidence, for here is another of the great climactic tragedies.

The noble figure of the Moor, hoodwinked and played upon by the villainous Iago, until his jealousy is aroused to a frenzy which destroys the gentle, pathetic Desdemona, is a moving and truly human picture. Iago is boldly a villain, like Richard III and Don John in *Much Ado*, doing evil because he is evil and offering no other motive; but granting this premise, he moves a consistent figure of life. The story comes from *The Hundred Fables* of Cinthio, published in 1565, no translation of which contemporary with Shakespeare is known.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817. Everyman's Library, p. 32 ff.; Charles Lamb, *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, considered*

with reference to their fitness for stage representation, 1811; Helena Faucit, Lady Martin, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, 1885; A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1904; A. C. Swinburne, *Three Plays of Shakespeare*, 1909. H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1886.

\*\*\* *King Lear* (1605?, 1st ptd. 1608)

Perhaps no greater illustration of Shakespeare's genius can be found than in considering the genesis of this tragedy. An ancient folk-tale of a king and his three daughters, already roughly shaped into dramatic form in an old play, he takes and makes into one of his greatest tragedies, a tragedy of old age and youth. Here, as in *Hamlet*, he touches the summit of his achievement as poet, philosophizer of life, and as dramatist—a summit so high that one must travel backwards to Sophocles in order to find an equal loftiness of language, interpretive concept, and tragic inevitability. No more profound instance of moving us by pity and terror exists in all literature than that in which the figure of Lear stands before us holding the body of his dead daughter in his arms. Even *Hamlet* has no such moment as this.

For a reader curious to trace the folk-tale, the story will first be found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Chronicle* (1147), whence it was copied by many chroniclers down to Holinshed. Spenser, too, in the *Faerie Queene* told of Lear; and there was a pre-Shakespearean play *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his Three Daughters*. Certain elements of the sub-plot (Gloucester story) are probably derived from the story of the blind king of Paphlagonia in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590). It was Shakespeare alone, however, who turned the story into a great interpretation of life.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library, p. 118 ff.; S. T. Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare*; A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1904. H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1880.



\*\*\* *Macbeth* (1606?, 1st ptd. 1623)

This is the fourth of the great tragedies, the others being *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, which mark the climax of Shakespeare's achievement. These four plays alone are sufficient to make English literature unique.

*Macbeth* is the most Greek-like of the four, with its conception of Fate, personified in the three witches, ruling the destiny of mankind, but it is Shakespearean in that the true essence of the tragedy lies within Macbeth himself, in his ambition that over-leaped itself, and in the final analysis the fault is in himself and not in his stars. Shakespeare seems to have held most definitely a belief in man's moral responsibility for the consequences of his actions. In *Macbeth* he shows us the moral decay of a great soul, and the witches plant the seed but cannot be made to take the blame for this decay.

The story Shakespeare took from Holinshed.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library, p. 12 ff.; Thomas de Quincey, *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth*, 1823; A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1904.  
H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., revised, 1903.

\* *Timon of Athens* (1607?, 1st ptd. 1623)

This play is another puzzle to the critics, some of them believing that Shakespeare had one or more collaborators in writing it, others that he wrote the whole. It is difficult to believe that, if he wrote it all, it is a work so late in his career as to follow *Lear*. On the other hand, the character of Timon is almost certainly wholly Shakespearean in conception and writing. Apart from Timon himself, the play is chaotic and not very interesting. North's *Plutarch* (*Life of Antony*), or possibly an older play, is the source.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library, p. 47 ff.



**\*\* *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607?, 1st ptd. 1623)**

Once more Shakespeare turned to North's *Plutarch* for the story of the loves of Antony and Cleopatra. Historically this play is a sequel to *Julius Cæsar*. Two great figures remain vivid in our imaginations after reading this play, those of Antony and of Cleopatra whom "age could not wither." In plot-structure the play is one of the most episodic, nevertheless the constant changes of scene do not, somehow, as one reads, interrupt either the impression of unity or the great cumulative interest in action and character.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, 1817, Everyman's Library, p. 73 ff.; John Dryden, *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, (a dramatization of the story made according to the dramatic "rules" of the seventeenth century); S. T. Coleridge, *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare*, 1846, Everyman's Library; A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 1909.  
H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1907.

**\* *Pericles* (1606-1608? 1st ptd. 1609)**

This is another doubtful play, doubtful that is touching the question of what share Shakespeare had in its authorship. Possibly it is an early play by Shakespeare, which he later re-vamped; or possibly he touched up the work of other collaborators. There are portions that seem most certainly to be Shakespearean, and the whole was included by his friends and fellow-actors in the first Folio.

The story is found in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (ptd. 1483), as well as in many earlier writers.

Collateral reading: *Sidelights on Shakespeare*, H. D. Sykes, 1919. (Contains a discussion of the authorship of *Pericles*.)

**\* *Coriolanus* (1608-1609? 1st ptd. 1623)**

This is the last of Shakespeare's Roman plays based upon North's *Plutarch*. Although it has a power of characterization equal to the author's maturity, nevertheless equally upon the stage and within the covers of a book it lacks interest, being, in

fact, dull and slow moving. The figure of Coriolanus is, however, an impressive example of greatness.

Collateral reading: M. W. McCallum, *Shakespeare's Roman Plays and their Background*, 1910; W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., pp. 53-63; S. A. Brooke, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, 6th ed., 1919, pp. 221-252.

\* *Cymbeline* (1610? 1st ptd. 1623)

The interest and charm of this play lie almost wholly in its poetical passages and in the character of Imogen, the heroine. In other respects, the story is confused and loosely told, although it has many incidents of dramatic intensity. The reader is advised, however, not to omit Imogen from his study of Shakespeare's women. The source is in part from Holinshed, and possibly from Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library, pp. 1-11; Helena Faucit, Lady Martin, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, 1885.

\*\* *The Winter's Tale* (1610-1611? 1st ptd. 1623)

This beautiful comedy that threatens almost to be a tragedy is founded on Robert Greene's *Pandosto*<sup>1</sup> (1588), but having said this, as in the case of other adaptations by Shakespeare, there is no further obligation to emphasize. Hermione, Perdita, Autolycus, to mention only three characters, so reward the reader that all minor questions about the jealousy of Leontes, the time-break in the story, and the two dissimilar halves of the play fade into obscurity and are not worth thinking about. And again Shakespeare has found that sweetness of the lyric note which he alone knows how to use in drama.

Collateral reading: W. Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., pp. 213-219; Mary Cowden Clarke, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*, 1850-1852, "Hermione"; Helen Faucit, Lady Martin, *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters*, No. IX, "Hermione."

H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1898.

<sup>1</sup> See Greene, p. 64. The full title was *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*.



\*\*\* *The Tempest* (1611? 1st ptd. 1623)

The imaginative fancy of Shakespeare could go no further in creating pleasure for the reader than he has done in this, his last comedy. Perhaps had he lived longer he might have again equalled *The Tempest* but it is difficult to believe that he could have surpassed it.

Not only has the story itself charm, particularly in the pure youthful loves of Ferdinand and Miranda, but along with this are such amazing conceptions as Caliban, that spirit of earth, and Ariel, quintessence of all spiritual conceptions. Nor must Prospero be left out of the account.

There are no known sources for this play, beyond accounts of voyages to the Bermudas, which could have had no influence beyond giving the inspiration for an idea of an enchanted island. Here is a whole philosophy of life expressed in terms of such beauty that Shakespeare himself has made of his thought and its expression magic wands equal to those of Prospero in creating wonders. Romanticism cannot show anywhere so perfect a document.

Collateral reading: Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, Everyman's Library ed., p. 88. S. T. Coleridge, *Notes and Lectures on Shakespeare*, 1849, Everyman's Library; S. A. Brooke, *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, 1905, chap. X; R. Browning, *Caliban upon Setebos*, 1864, in Cambridge edition. H. H. Furness, *New Variorum* ed., 1892.

\* *Henry VIII* (1613? 1st ptd. 1623)

Last in the list, with a conjectural date of three years before his death, stands another historical play, based upon Holinshed, which it is highly probable is only partly the work of Shakespeare.

There is a lack of unity in the conception of the plot that indicates to some critics two other collaborators besides Shakespeare, as if certain scenes, for example, had been independently written and then pieced loosely together. On the other hand, it is impossible to doubt that Shakespeare wrote some of it, especially



vivifying, it would seem, the characters of the king, Wolsey, and Katharine.

Collateral reading: \*\*\* George Cavendish, *The Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, in The New Universal Library. (Cavendish was a contemporary of Wolsey.) See also J. A. Froude, *The Reign of Henry VIII*, Everyman's Library edition of Froude's *History of England*. (A partisan view of Henry as against Wolsey.)

### *Shakespeare's Poems*

The study of Shakespeare is a unit and therefore these brief notes on his poems are placed with those on his plays instead of in the section devoted to Elizabethan poetry.

Apart from the value of his poems as specimens of great poetry, there is another interest in them, namely the endeavour by studying them to come more closely to the man Shakespeare. No more impersonal and detached writer ever wrote: nowhere behind the plays may we catch more than the faintest glimpse of his personality, nothing more, that is, than a general outline, such as of a man to whom right and wrong, good and evil, and human kindness and human unkindness were words to be taken at their ordinary, every day face value. A few more ideas we could add to this stock, but out of it all we can get no true conception of the personal feelings and emotions throughout his life of the person whom his contemporaries called "gentle Will." The narrative poems and the personal sonnets would seem to offer a better chance to learn about Shakespeare the man, and thus it has been that scholars have turned to them and searched them inside and out, only to fail in the end to pluck out the heart of the mystery. Shakespeare himself still eludes us.

*Venus and Adonis*, "the first heir" of his "invention," was published in 1593 with a dedication to the Earl of Southampton. It is a beautiful poem, uneven in its good points, as is almost always the work of young poets, but already characterized by a delicacy of treatment, melodious verse, and pictures and colour.

In the following year *The Rape of Lucrece*, also dedicated to Southampton was published. In the opinion of modern critics this poem is inferior to *Venus and Adonis* because it seems less spontaneous and more carefully laboured within the laws of verse-composition. There is considerable evidence, however, that a great deal of Shakespeare's literary reputation among his contemporaries rested upon these two poems. Playwriting was then regarded almost as a journeyman's trade, and was looked down upon as an unimportant branch of literature, at least for a person of culture.

If these two poems yield nothing about Shakespeare himself, the \*\*\* *Sonnets* (1st ptd. 1609) <sup>1</sup> yield nothing but a great deal of dispute and controversy. The interpretation of these poems is too intricate a question to be considered here, and the same is true concerning the debate over the person to whom they were dedicated. It is sufficient to say that the evidence points toward the Earl of Southampton, but even so mild a statement as this is dangerous. What the reader would really like to know is whether in these Sonnets Shakespeare unlocks his heart or follows merely the literary convention of his time in "sonneteering" to an idealized friendship. Unfortunately, this question cannot be answered with any final assurance; the fact that many of these sonnets reveal passion and are a lyric expression of other deep feelings is obvious to the most casual reader, but the causes, who the friend, who the "dark lady," and so on, remain as baffling mysteries as ever. We do not know even if the order of arrangement in which they have come down to us is the sequence Shakespeare wished us to follow. In the last analysis, we can only read these *Sonnets* and be thankful we have them, for some of them belong to the greatest of English lyric poetry.

The whole of the *Sonnets* should be read, but if a selection is

<sup>1</sup> Two of the Sonnets, nos. cxxxviii and cxliv were published in 1599 in *The Passionate Pilgrim*.



made, the following are recommended: I–XVII; XVIII; XXV; XXIX; XXX; XXXIII; LIV; LV; LX; LXIV; LXV; LXVI; LXXI; LXXIII; LXXVI; XCVII; XCVIII; XCIX; CIV; CVI; CVII; CIX; CX; CXI; CXVI; CXIX; CXXVIII; CXXX; CXLVI.

Collateral reading: *The Sonnets of William Shakespeare*, E. Dowden, 1881.

For plays of uncertain authorship attributed to Shakespeare in whole or in part, see: C. F. Tucker Brooke: *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, 1908.

As some of these plays are worth reading as specimens of the Elizabethan drama, the following list of them is appended: \*\*\* *Arden of Feversham*; *The Birth of Merlin*; *Edward III*; *Fair Em*; \* *Locrine*; \*\* *The Mery Devil of Edmonton*; *Mucedorus*; *The Puritan*; \*\* *Sir Thomas More*; *Thomas, Lord Cromwell*; \* *The Two Noble Kinsmen*; *A Yorkshire Tragedy*; *The Troublesome Reign of King John*.

### BEN JONSON (1573?–1637)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. I.

No one of Shakespeare's contemporaries among the dramatists is so well-known as a personality as Ben Jonson. He was a large, learned, quarrelsome man, with a fund of critical theories about the art of playwriting and a genius for dramatic composition that was often greater than his critical theories. More than once, in his comedies, he has set the Elizabethan age living before us, and for this reason he is read to-day not only by scholars and students of the drama but equally by all to whom life is of interest.

He was not always a whole-hearted admirer of Shakespeare, complaining that he "wanted art"—*i.e.*, lacked a training in the critical principles of the drama, and for this complaint he has been accused of jealousy toward his greater rival. His tribute to Shakespeare, prefixed to the engraving in the first Folio, must be set off, however, against this inference of jealousy. The truth is that Jonson's theory or method of playwriting was at variance not only with that of Shakespeare but with the whole contemporary stage as well.

His four great comedies are: \*\* *Volpone, or The Fox* (1605?–1606?); \* *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609); \*\*\* *The Alchemist*



(1610); and \*\* *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). To these should be added the earlier comedy \* *Every Man in His Humour* (1598).

In *Volpone* Jonson's comic spirit is a cruel one, as indeed it often is, for he is merciless in his intellectual contempt for human nature gulled, and for the tricksters and criminals who prey upon gullible men. *The Alchemist*, for example, is a ruthless exposure of those who hope to get something for nothing, only to find that this is one of the most costly hopes in which stupid humanity indulges.

*The Silent Woman*, on the other hand, is literally noisy farce. Morose, who hates noise above all things in this world, is tricked into marrying a wife who turns out first to be the noisiest person in town; and second, to be no wife at all, but a boy in disguise.

*Bartholomew Fair* is a panorama on a huge scale of an annual street fair and of holiday London in a riot of indulgence. Through the picture rages the Puritan hypocrite denouncing all and sundry, after his own appetite has first been sated. There is nowhere else in Elizabethan literature such a photograph of the London streets and their inhabitants during an orgy of coarse pleasures. The boisterous uproariness of the citizens whistles past our ears with as much force as the winds of March when they blow.

*Every Man in his Humour* is a comedy of manners, that is to say, the picture of the foibles of a cross-section of society. "Humour" means, in Jonsonian English, a personal trait or idiosyncrasy strong enough to be the dominating element in a person's character.

His tragedies, on which he prided himself, because in them he revealed his classical learning and his knowledge of the "rules" of dramatic composition derived from Aristotle's *Poetics* and Horace's *Art of Poetry*, are not so interesting to present day readers as his comedies. \* *Catiline and His Conspiracy* (1611), however, arouses our recollections of school-days when Cicero's orations were construed painfully line by line. Jonson mars his

tragedies by his pedantry and long-windedness. The difference between Jonson and Shakespeare in writing Roman tragedies was this: Jonson wished to make of his tragedy a vehicle for the display of his accurate knowledge of his authorities; Shakespeare to make of his tragedy a good acting play.

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*Ben Jonson's Plays*. Mermaid Series.

\*\* *Timber, or Discoveries*: Ed. by F. E. Schelling, 1892.

Swinburne thought this prose work of Jonson's superior to Bacon's essays. Present opinion does not rate it so high, but it is interesting for its reference to Shakespeare.

\* *Seventeenth Century Studies*: Sir Edmund Gosse, 3rd ed. 1897.

See essay on Jonson, and the same author's *The Jacobean Poets*, 1899.

*A Study of Ben Jonson*: A. C. Swinburne, 1889.

*The English Comic Writers*: W. Hazlitt.

*Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*: W. Hazlitt.

GEORGE CHAPMAN<sup>1</sup> (1559?–1634)

Camb. Hist. of Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. II.

Chapman, the translator of Homer, has left at least one tragedy that belongs by right of its own merits to the lengthy scroll of Elizabethan drama. This is *Bussy D'Ambois* (1607). Bussy is a magnificent and heroic adventurer. Chapman's dramatization of his story is a melodramatic romance embellished by rhetorical but splendid verse. Chapman fairly overflows with the exuberance of the Elizabethan age, a quality in his work that brought upon him, later, the censure of Dryden, yet it is the very quality that speaks to us of his age in Chapman to-day.

## SEE ALSO:

*Plays*: Ed. by W. L. Phelps, Mermaid Series, 1895.

Contains five plays, including *Bussy D'Ambois*.

*Literary Remains*: S. T. Coleridge, 1836, Vol. I, pp. 259–263.

*The Jacobean Poets*: Sir Edmund Gosse, 1899.

*A Study of Ben Jonson*: A. C. Swinburne, 1889.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 69.



## THOMAS DEKKER (1570?-1641?)

This prolific dramatist has bequeathed us at least two comedies for which we may be grateful, a realistic picture of everyday life, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600) and a fantastic, folk-lore comedy *Old Fortunatus* (1600).

\*\*\* *The Shoemaker's Holiday* recounts the rise to fortune of that master of "the gentle craft" (*i.e.*, shoemaking) Sir Simon Eyre,<sup>1</sup> during the course of whose elevation we meet the business world of Elizabethan London. It is a vivid and amusing play.

\* *Old Fortunatus* is the dramatization of the folk-narrative of the man given by Fortune a bottomless purse, with the consequent troubles that follow from such "good luck." In this play Dekker shows himself a poet of remarkable talent, although the play, based as it is on a "travel plot" is rambling.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. (See also bibliography under Webster)

*Plays*: Ed. by E. Rhys. Mermaid series, 1895. Contains: *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *Old Fortunatus*, and two others.

## THOMAS MIDDLETON (1570?-1627)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. III.

Middleton is another Elizabethan realist, combining sometimes with his realism the conceptions of a strange and powerful imagination. His realism is seen at its best in his comedies, of which \*\* *The Roaring Girl*<sup>2</sup> is the one most likely to please a reader. The heroine, in part drawn from life, is an extreme example of the woman with a masculine spirit of adventure, who wears a sword, smokes a pipe, and plays a realistic knight-errantry in behalf of lovers entangled in vivid but unsavoury adventures.

<sup>1</sup> See Thomas Deloney's narrative *Sir Simon Eyer* in *English Short Stories from the XVth to the XXth Centuries*, Everyman's Library.

<sup>2</sup> Dekker is thought to have had an important share in the writing of this comedy.



By way of contrast, Middleton's tragedy \*\* *The Changeling*<sup>1</sup> is a sombre piece of violence, with some extraordinarily effective situations, and one character, de Flores, who has become proverbial as a kind of hero-villain or villain-hero.

Middleton likewise collaborated often with other contemporary dramatists, notably with Rowley, Dekker, Massinger, Jonson and Fletcher.

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*Plays:* Mermaid Series. Vol. I, ed. by A. C. Swinburne, contains: *A Trick to Catch the Old One*; *The Changeling*; *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*; *Women Beware Women*; *The Spanish Gypsy*. Vol. II, ed. by Havelock Ellis, contains: *The Roaring Girl*; *The Witch* (interesting because of the resemblance of its witches to those in Macbeth); *A Fair Quarrel*; *The Mayor of Queensborough*; *The Widow*.

#### THOMAS HEYWOOD (1572?–1650)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. IV.

Heywood, on his own confession, was one of the most prolific writers among the Elizabethan dramatists, for he credits himself with having had "either an entire hand or a main finger" in some two hundred and twenty plays. His chief contribution, in the opinion of to-day, is his domestic tragedy entitled \*\*\* *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1607). The title was a proverbial phrase in Elizabethan times. The story is one of adultery; the characters are realistically portrayed, but the commonplace theme is relieved by the treatment which makes the characters living persons. The nobility of the wronged husband is, for Heywood's day, an unexpected note. Some time is to pass before English literature is to produce a novel on this theme so true to life as this play.

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*Plays:* Ed. by A. W. Verity. With introduction by J. A. Symonds. Mermaid Series, 1888.

Contains: *A Woman Killed with Kindness*; *The Fair Maid of the West*; *The English Traveller*; *The Wise Woman of Hogsden*; *The Rape of Lucrece*.

<sup>1</sup> Rowley was a collaborator in this play.

JOHN FLETCHER (1579-1625) AND  
FRANCIS BEAUMONT (1585?-1616)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. V.

These two dramatists collaborated in their principal plays, although Fletcher was also an independent author. It is usual, however, to think of them in conjunction. They were the fashionable playwrights of King James' period, and were more highly thought of by the court circles than was Shakespeare. They were considered to write with a superior refinement, to represent a more polished age, nor did they care for the "low humour" of the Shakespearean clowns. To modern readers some of their plays have the charm of beautifully written poetic romances, and are moving when the note of pathos is struck, but, at their best, we do not consider them in the same breath with Shakespeare.

The following are suggested as an introduction to these authors: \*\*\* *Philaster, or Love Lies a Bleeding*; \* *The Maid's Tragedy*; \*\*\* *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*; and \* *The Faithful Shepherdess* (by Fletcher alone).

*Philaster* is an involved romance of passionate love, jealousy, and cruelty told, nevertheless, with much pathos and in beautiful poetry; *The Maid's Tragedy*, in spite of a chaotic mixture of ribaldry, has several great scenes, such as the confession of Evadne that she has married in order to cloak her guilt with the king, and the scene in which she at last takes vengeance on her seducer. But there is the same violence and confusion in the incidents which seem to all modern readers, except A. C. Swinburne, to characterize the romantic plays, as a whole, of these authors. Individual passages and scenes are magnificent; the whole sometimes is repellent.

Quite different, however, is the burlesque *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, a parody on dramas of medieval romance. The



comedy of the grocer's wife, witnessing her son's performance as a romantic hero, makes one wish for more humour of this kind from these authors.

Finally, Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* is one of the most beautiful in its lyric quality of all the pastoral dramas in English outside of Shakespeare.

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*The Bridal:* Sheridan Knowles, 1837.

An alteration of *The Maid's Tragedy*, written for the actor W. C. Macready.

*Literary Remains:* S. T. Coleridge, 1836. Vol. II, pp. 289-292.

A. C. Swinburne challenges these notes and maintains his doubt in Coleridge's knowledge of his subject.

*Beaumont and Fletcher:* A. C. Swinburne. In *Studies in Prose and Poetry*, pp. 53-83. 1894.

An exaggerated eulogy. See reference above.

*The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare:* A. H. Thorndike, 1901.

#### PHILIP MASSINGER (1583-1640)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. VI.

Massinger has written one play which not only held the boards of the theatre to the end of the old stock-company days a generation ago, but is still thrilling reading, \*\*\* *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, (ptd. 1632). It has the violence of plot found in many of the successors of Shakespeare; indeed, the taste of the post-Shakespearean audiences seemed to demand extravagances of lust and melodramatic horrors, nevertheless the character of Sir Giles Overreach is a great dramatic figure. Sir Giles' label-name "Overreach" expresses what in the end happens to this terrifying villain, a man who tries to send his nephew to the gallows, who is prepared to sacrifice his daughter's honour, and who boasts of his cruelties, until he overreaches himself into madness and becomes a pitiful and contemptible figure.



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## JOHN WEBSTER (1580?–1625?)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. VII.

Webster, about whose life practically nothing is known, reveals in his most important play \*\*\* *The Duchess of Malfi*, a sombre, brooding, disillusioned mind that makes the reader wish to know the man's personal history. The play is so obviously the work of a mind embittered, one of such power and trenchant cynicism that it seems as if there must have been profound reasons for such an attitude. Along with the horrors which his imagination extravagantly produces for us in this play, is revealed also a penetrating, almost startling knowledge of life and of the lower depths of human nature. No man could have written this play, granting all its horrors and improbabilities, who had not known and experienced almost the worst of all that can be known and experienced in life. Hardly less absorbing, in its power to make the reader feel the uncanny personality behind the play, is his other masterpiece \* *The White Devil*.

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\* *Seventeenth Century Studies*: Sir Edmund Gosse. 1883.

Contains the best critical study of Webster.

*Studies in Prose and Verse*: A. C. Swinburne, 1894. See Webster.

## JOHN FORD (fl. 1639)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. VIII.

In viewing a few scenes from the pageant of the Elizabethan stage, the reader will pause a moment at Ford's \* *The Broken Heart* (ptd. 1633). The scene is Sparta and the author has striven, not unsuccessfully, to make his tragic events turn upon a Greek

conception of Fate. Of course Ford is lacking in the simplicity of theme and the straightforwardness of action of the Greek drama, nor is Sparta a suitable locale for a Renaissance love-tragedy, nevertheless his characters have nobility and his tragedy a great deal of the emotional effect at which he aimed.

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Contains five plays, including *The Broken Heart* and *Perkin Warbeck*, a chronicle-history play of the reign of Henry VII.

*The Broken Heart:* Ed. Clinton Scollard. 1895.

*Essays and Studies:* A. C. Swinburne. 1888. John Ford.

## JAMES SHIRLEY (1596-1666)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VI, chap. VIII.

Shirley's comedies anticipate in many respects the comedy of manners of the Restoration. His most famous play is \* *The Gamester* (ptd. 1637), and succeeding ages continued to adapt and re-work its plot. King Charles I said of it that it was the best play he had ever seen. Although one may not wholly agree with the royal taste, the play has an ingeniously contrived surprise-plot and the gambling-scenes are vivid enough to satisfy the reader. On the other hand, a general warning against the licentiousness of Shirley's language should in fairness be uttered.

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It is unfortunate that *The Gamester* is omitted, probably because of its objectionable language, from the Mermaid Series of *Shirley's Plays*, ed., Sir Edmund Gosse, 1888. It may, however, be found in large libraries in the complete works edited by W. Gifford and A. Dyce, 6 vols., 1833. For an example of Shirley's comedy of manners, assuming the Mermaid Series as the accessible edition, \* *Hyde Park* is suggested. \* *The Cardinal*, in the same volume, is a tragedy influenced by Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. Andrew Lang recommends \* *The Witty Fair One*, in this collection, as Shirley's best comedy. The reader may take his choice.

## MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS OF ELIZABETHAN AUTHORS

John Earle, Bishop of Salisbury (1601-1665). \* *Microcosmographie*, ed., A. S. West, 1897.

Amusing "characters," i.e., portraits of contemporary types.

Stephen Gosson (1554-1624). \* *The School of Abuse*, ed., J. P. Collier, 1841.

Accessible in large libraries. A puritan attack on manners and customs.

Sir Thomas Overbury (1581-1613). \* *Characters*, ed., E. F. Rimbault, 1890.

Contains the famous character of Richard Burbage, the principal actor of Shakespeare's company.

Henry Peacham. \* *The Compleat Gentleman*, ed., G. S. Gordon, 1905.

The details of a nobleman's education.

*Queen Elizabeth and Her Times*: T. Wright, 2 vols., 1888.

Original contemporary letters.

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## Puritan and Cavalier

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## PURITAN AND CAVALIER

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- History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate:* S. R. Gardiner, 2 vols., 1897.  
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*History of England:* T. B. Macaulay, vols. I and II.  
*Characters and Episodes of the Great Rebellion:* G. D. Boyle. 1889.  
Selected from Clarendon's contemporary *History of the Rebellion*.  
*The Age of Milton:* J. H. B. Masterman. 1897.  
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*The Book of Witches:* O. M. Hueffer. 1908.  
\*\*\* *A Book of Seventeenth Century Lyrics:* N. Ault. 1928.  
*The Age of Dryden:* R. Garnett. 1895.  
*English Mystical Verse:* D. H. S. Nicholson and A. H. E. Lee.

### Cavalier

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VII, chap. I.

The stream of lyric poetry which first gushed forth after Wyatt and Surrey in *Tottel's Miscellany* continued to flow with undiminished sweetness through the reign of Charles I, to reach a climax in the poetry of Robert Herrick (see below). There are changes in the tendencies of these lyrics, changes seen principally in the giving up of Italian models and the return to classic forms. The sonnet declined and was no longer the fashion. The passionate prostration before a mistress of the Elizabethan lyric was changed to the language of a more courtly love. The beauties of the English countryside, nevertheless, continued to be sung with fervour, the influence of court refinement failing to make artificial the Englishman's instinctive feeling for English nature.

## ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674)

Herrick lived both in London and in Devonshire, where he held the living of Dean Prior. In London he knew and was influenced by Ben Jonson and his liking for the classics; in Devonshire he came to know all sides of country life. He was a bachelor, but many of his most delightful lyrics celebrate his imaginary mistresses. A collection of twelve hundred of his lyrics was published in 1648 under the title \*\*\* *Hesperides*, a body of verse which Swinburne has called "the crowning star" of the constellation of English verse which began with Wyatt and Surrey.

Herrick's *Hesperides* is a book which belongs in the general reader's library; for readers wishing a selection from Herrick's lyrics the following are recommended: *The Argument of his Book*; *To the Virgins*; *Upon Julia's Clothes*; *Delight in Disorder*; *Corinna's Going A-Maying*; *To Daffodils*; *Cherry-Ripe*; *The Bracelet*; *Upon the Loss of his Mistress*; *How Roses Came Red*; *To Music*; *To Anthea*; *Upon a Child that Died*; *To Daisies*; *Art Above Nature*; *The Night-Piece*; *To Electra*; *An Ode for Ben Jonson*; *Comfort to a Youth that had Lost his Love*; *To Blossoms*; *Grace for a Child*; *Litany to the Holy Spirit*.

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*Poetical Works*: Ed. by F. W. Moorman. 1915. Complete edition.

*Hesperides*: Ed. by A. Pollard, with introduction by A. C. Swinburne. Muses' Library Series.

The introduction is an important piece of criticism.

*Hesperides, and Noble Numbers*. Everyman's Library. Noble Numbers is the collection of Herrick's religious poems.

*Seventeenth Century Studies*: Sir Edmund Gosse. 1883. Herrick.

## THOMAS CAREW (1598?-1639?)

Carew ranks next to Herrick among the Cavalier lyrists, but lacks Herrick's variety of subject and quality of self-revelation. Carew is a poet of the court, belonging in technique to the circle

of Ben Jonson, and did not, as did Herrick, live in the country a good part of his life. His poetry, therefore, is more formal, and is lacking in that love of nature which characterizes many of Herrick's lyrics. Nevertheless, Carew's poems have a certain delicacy and charm pleasing to the modern reader.

The following lyrics are recommended: *Ask me no more; Would you know; The Protestation; The True Beauty; Persuasion to Joy; Mediocrity in Love Rejected; Ingrateful Beauty Threatened; An Epitaph.*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Poems*: Ed. by A. Vincent. 1899. Muses' Library series.

## SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1609-1642)

Suckling, wealthy courtier and gentleman, soldier and poet, may be regarded as the arch-type of the Cavalier lyrists, who wrote, apparently with effortless ease in his spare time, poems sometimes licentious or obscene, sometimes of singular charm and beauty.

The following are recommended: *A Doubt of Martyrdom; The Constant Lover; Why so Pale and Wan?*

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*Works*: Ed. by A. H. Thompson. 1910.

## RICHARD LOVELACE (1618-1658)

Lovelace is known to the modern world by one beautiful lyric, *To Althea from Prison*, which is often quoted

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.

Curiously enough, this poem is almost the extent of his important literary work, although two others deserve to be known as well. It is strange that a man, writing a number of poems, should in the midst of mediocrity and worse, nevertheless earn an unques-



tioned place through only three poems in all anthologies of English verse.

These poems are: *To Althea from Prison*; *To Lucasta, Going to the Wars*; *To Lucasta, Going Beyond the Seas*. All three of these poems will be found in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, First Series, Everyman's Library.

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\*\*\* *A Book of Seventeenth Century Lyrics*: F. E. Schelling. 1899. The best general anthology.

*Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*: George Saintsbury. 3 vols., 1905-1921.

For interesting literary by-paths among authors not referred to in this section, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. VII, chap. IV.

#### The Sacred Poets (17th Century)

*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. VII, chap. II.

The group of poets to be considered in this section made of the lyric, partly from the inspiration of John Donne, a medium for the expression of personal religious feeling. For the love of a mistress, the frequent theme of other lyrists, these poets turned to give utterance to the love of the Holy Spirit. The age had changed its temper and turned to reflection upon more serious ideas, a change in part brought about by a new spirit of devotion to the Church of England.

#### GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

George Herbert is not a great poet, but he is a poet in whom many readers have found help and inspiration for their own lives. His volume of collected poems, published after his death and entitled *The Temple*, he himself described as a book in which could be found "a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master; in whose service I have now found perfect freedom." It is the fact that his poetry is a record of this spiritual conflict that makes many of his poems interesting.

The following are recommended: *Virtue; Love; The Collar; The Quip; The World; The Gifts of God* (or, *The Pulley*); *Discipline*.

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- The Temple*. Everyman's Library.
- Biographia Literaria*: S. T. Coleridge. See Sections XIX, XX.
- George Herbert and his Times*: A. G. Hyde. 1905.
- Puritan and Anglican Life*: E. Dowden. 1900. Essay on Herbert.
- Studies in Literature*: Sir A. Quiller-Couch, 1918. (Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, Crashaw, and others.)

## RICHARD CRASHAW (1613?-1649)

Crashaw is not a follower or imitator of Herbert, although of the group of poetical mystics. He passed through the Anglican Church into the Roman Catholic, and the further mystical influences in his poetry were from the Spanish mystics and the Italian poet Marino.

The following poems are recommended: *In the Holy Nativity of Our Lord God; Hymn to St. Teresa; Wishes for the Supposed Mistress*.

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- Seventeenth Century Studies*: Sir Edmund Gosse. 1897.
- See also Abraham Cowley's elegy of Crashaw.

## HENRY VAUGHAN (1622-1695)

Vaughan who was at first a writer of secular verse attributed his conversion to the mystic fold to the influence of George Herbert. Mysticism Vaughan combines with a love of nature, and in some instances his work is a foreshadowing of that of Wordsworth. Compare for example the lines from *The Retreat*:

Happy those early days when I  
Shone in my angel infancy.

with Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*.

The best of Vaughan's poems are his religious ones published in 1650 under the titles *Silex Scintillans*. The following list is recommended: *The Retreat; Silence and Stealth of Days; The Burial of an Infant; They are all gone into the World of Light; St. Mary Magdalen; The Timber; The Dwelling-Place; Peace; The World; The Revival*.

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*Puritan and Anglican*: E. Dowden. 1900.  
*Jacobean Poets*: Sir Edmund Gosse. 1889.

### Writers of the Couplet

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VII, chap. III.

#### EDMUND WALLER (1606-1687)

Waller was a poet much admired by Dryden for his ability in perfecting the English heroic couplet—two rhyming lines forming a complete unit of thought. A brief example of Waller's skill with the couplet is his poem *Old Age*. The modern reader will prefer him, probably, for his lyrics which are closely akin to those of the Cavalier poets, such as *Go, Lovely Rose*. He wrote many charming love-poems addressed to Sacharissa (Lady Dorothy Sidney). Other poems that may please the reader are: *The Story of Phoebus and Daphne, Applied; To Phyllis; On a Girdle*.

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*The Poems*: Ed. by G. T. Drury. 1893. With life of Waller.  
See also Waller in Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*.



SIR JOHN DENHAM (1615-1669)

Commended by Samuel Johnson for the same reason that Dryden praised Waller (the perfecting of the heroic couplet) Denham to-day has a precarious poetical existence in anthologies by virtue of two poems *Cooper's Hill* and *On Mr. Abraham Cowley's Death and Burial Amongst the Ancient Poets*. As a matter of fact, the anthologists limit even *Cooper's Hill* to a chosen passage or two. The poem describes the view in the neighbourhood of his house at Egham. It combines description with moral reflection, and its importance in literary history is that it is the first of a long line of similar poems. For the two poems mentioned see *Century Readings in English Literature*, ed., by J. W. Cunliffe, J. F. A. Pyre, and Karl Young, 1923. pp. 181-182.

ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618-1667)

Cowley was admired by Samuel Johnson and Charles Lamb; by Johnson, as being "the first who imparted to English numbers the enthusiasm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the less"; by Lamb, for having "one of the sweetest names, which carry a perfume in the mention." Modern readers care little for odes, and few will derive from Cowley the pleasure of reminiscence upon hearing his name. Nevertheless some of his lyrics are deservedly remembered and his prose essays have importance for students of his age. The poems recommended are: *A Supplication*; *The Swallow*; *The Wish*; *On the Death of Mr. William Hervey*; *Hymn to Light*. *The Complaint* is his one autobiographical poem and is interesting for this reason.

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 See also Cowley in Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. 1779-81.

## JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VII, chap. v.

Milton, the fourth on Hazlitt's list of the greatest English poets,<sup>1</sup> is a poet whose work must be read in the light of a knowledge of the facts of his life. The reader will find these facts embedded in a considerable mass of surrounding gossip. The facts are important for understanding Milton, the gossip of no more importance than such rubbish usually is. A thrice-married Puritan who was also a great poet and genius of the first rank can hardly fail, in an age of bitter controversy and revolution, to have gathered about his name his full share of innuendo. Milton's temperament, furthermore, was one to suggest guesses pleasant and unpleasant.

It follows, therefore, that Milton's poems should be read in chronological order, since the reading is to be related to a knowledge of his career. It will be assumed in these notes that a biography has first been read; the recommendation consequently will group his poems in the order of their composition.

Early poems: \*\*\* *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (composed 1629). This is the earliest of Milton's characteristic poems, characteristic in that it already shows the stateliness and grandeur of his verse coupled with the easy flow of his language. The "solemn music" of his style is heard in almost its greatest and final beauty.

Prefixed to the *Second Folio* of Shakespeare, published in 1632, will be found Milton's famous tribute \*\*\* *On Shakespeare*. This was composed in 1630, or possibly just before the publication of the Folio.

With \*\*\* *L'Allegro* and \*\*\* *Il Penseroso* the young poet comes to his full powers. These studies, one of cheerfulness, the other of melancholy, have the extraordinary felicity of language of the

<sup>1</sup> The others are Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare.



earlier Elizabethan lyrics, and have in addition a perfect expression of Milton's own genius, filled with precise and delicate images, which have always for the reader the suggestive power of association and recognition with pictures in the reader's own mind.

\*\* *Arcades*, fragment probably written between 1630 and 1634, was written for a masque to be performed at Harefield. It is dedicated to the Countess Dowager of Derby. The second song

\*\*\* *O'er the smooth enamelled green* is perfect.

\*\*\* *Comus*, also a masque, but unlike *Arcades*, complete, was written for the Earl of Bridgewater and performed at Ludlow Castle in Wales, 1634. Many lovers of Milton's poetry put this poem first among his shorter works; others may prefer *Lycidas*. The difference is a matter of taste. *Comus* need fear no judgment, not even of those who dislike an emphasis upon an ethical element in poetry.

\*\*\* *Lycidas*, published 1638, accompanied elegies by other writers on the death of Edward King, whom Milton knew at Cambridge. King was drowned on a voyage to Ireland in the summer of 1637. Praise of *Lycidas* has been universal, in spite of the curious digression in the poem, Sir Peter's denunciation of the clergy (see 11: 112-131), the first foreshadowing in Milton's verse of the part he was later to play in the rebellion. But apart from all critical questions that this digression might raise, the poem is unique in its form and in its beauty. Further, Milton was well aware of what he was doing in introducing the digression, as may be seen from his note prefixed to the poem, and therefore the interruption must be accepted as part of the author's conscious purpose.

In 1645 was published a volume of Milton's Latin poems, which critics of Latin poetry value highly.

Middle Period: Sonnets. For some twenty years Milton was fully occupied with the political controversies of the day and with



the cares of state as Latin Secretary in the Cromwellian government. Poetry was abandoned, except for the composition of some sonnets,<sup>1</sup> and his principal writings were in prose.<sup>2</sup> One of his prose pamphlets justifying divorce was entitled *Tetrarchordon*: two of his sonnets, Nos. XI and XII<sup>3</sup> are replies to the hostile critics of his views. Another sonnet addressed to \*\*\* *Cromwell*, May, 1652, contains the well-known quotation

“peace hath her victories  
No less renown’d than war.”

Other sonnets that should be read are: No. XV, *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont* (1655); \*\*\* No. XVI, *On his Blindness*; No. XIX, *On his Deceased Wife* (the second wife); \*\*\* *To Mr. Cyriack Skinner*.

Third Period. In 1667 the first edition of \*\*\* *Paradise Lost* appeared, “written in ten books.” The second edition is dated 1674 and the poem is now in twelve books, “revised and augmented” by the author. Very little is known about the actual facts of the composition of this epic, one of the greatest monuments of English literature. He had long planned to write an epic, and had considered a long list of subjects from British and Scriptural history. Among these subjects was that of Arthur of Britain. All attempts to find actual sources for *Paradise Lost* have not been very successful. The whole of Milton’s vast learning and scholarship, his knowledge of the *Old Testament* and of the *Apocrypha*, and, in short, a lifetime of reading and study are fused together by the fervour of his emotion in this poem. Milton blind, his government defeated and swept away by the Restoration of Charles II, in these last years of his life has taken stock of

<sup>1</sup> A few belong to his earlier period.

<sup>2</sup> See end of this section.

<sup>3</sup> As numbered in the Oxford edition of his poems.

all that he has to say, and said it with a sustained power and grandeur of conception not to be equalled except by Dante. The reader feels the depth and emotional strength of a great soul, seeking "to justify the ways of God to man" while "the sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine" parade the streets in triumph. No lost cause ever uttered so tremendous a parting shot, a shot so effective, indeed, as to preserve that cause in being until to-day. To generations of people the story of the Garden of Eden has been not that in the *Book of Genesis* but the story Milton told in *Paradise Lost*.

If a reader insists upon a list of selections from this poem instead of reading the whole, the following is suggested: Books I and II entire; Book III as far as l: 415; Book IV to l: 535; Book IX; Book X; Book XII.

\*\* *Paradise Regained*, published in 1671 in four books is little inferior in poetic value to *Paradise Lost*, but has not had the hold upon the affection of the public that the earlier poem still retains. It is long for its subject, and lacks the variety of *Paradise Lost*. Probably a general reader who begins the first book will read to the end, unless suffering from a preconceived idea that *Paradise Regained* is an inferior poem.

\* *Samson Agonistes* was published in the same volume with *Paradise Regained*. It is a dramatic poem, interesting for itself, and especially for the parallel between Milton and Samson. It is a tragedy on a classical model, and one of the few on this model that have emerged in English as successful poems. The preface *Of that Sort of Dramatic Poems Which is Call'd Tragedy* is of great importance in the history of English dramatic criticism.

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wife in fiction.)

# Caroline Prose

There are two books of the time of Charles I that belong in our modern treasury of English literature. One of these is the anonymous \*\*\* *Eikon Basilike* <sup>1</sup> (King's Book, 1649), a "portrai-  
ture of his Sacred Majesty (Charles I) in his Sufferings." It is  
believed by scholars to have been the work of John Gauden  
(1605-1662), although there were contemporaries who allege that  
they had seen portions of the manuscript in the handwriting of  
Charles. The book, whoever wrote it, is a fascinating one,  
putting forth in somewhat idealized form the principles, personal  
feelings, piety and prejudices of a man who, misguided as a king,

<sup>1</sup> See Milton's reply *Eikonoklastes* (1649).



was nevertheless a gentleman. The picture of Charles' mind is an accurate one.

The second book of this time is *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650) by Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667). For style and for matter this work is a masterpiece able to defy time and changing tastes. Coleridge listed Taylor with Shakespeare, Bacon and Milton, a grouping that no one will care to dispute. There is none of the heaviness of diction that a reader usually associates in his mind with the writings of a divine. Taylor's prose is "modern"—i.e., most readable to-day, and in other respects it is far superior to much prose that we call "modern."

*Eikon Basilike* has been republished in *The King's Classic* series. *Holy Living* has been edited by A. R. Waller, 2 vols., 1900.

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An interesting novel giving the historical, social, and religious background of the times.

#### JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VII, chap. VII.

One of the amazing facts about creative writing is that John Bunyan, a poor peasant artisan, who had suffered for his faith twelve years of prison, with little other learning or background than a thorough knowledge of the English Bible, should be able to compose a masterpiece that can successfully pass all tests, either of literary criticism or of popular appeal; a work moreover in the form of an allegory, which in his day was already an outworn literary convention. Nevertheless, \*\*\* *Pilgrim's Progress* is such a masterpiece.

There were three editions in rapid succession, beginning in 1678, the third, in 1679, this last being a revision, with additions, of the allegorical story, and was the final form. *Pilgrim's*

*Progress* is an original work, owing little or nothing to medieval allegories or to devotional and theological literature of a later period. It was written while Bunyan was once more in prison (for violating the law against non-conformist preaching) where he had no opportunity to consult books. Such resemblances as it has to other works are owing first to the allegorical form (allegories necessarily resemble one another structurally and in idea-concept) and, second, to so much of its material being drawn from the Bible. In style and in vivid, dramatic character-portrayal, and in the hold the story and its incidents have upon the reader, *Pilgrim's Progress* is unique. Its influence, moreover, upon English speaking peoples has been tremendous. Time was when every cottage and every small shop-keeper's house contained a Bible, a copy of *Paradise Lost*, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, with, more rarely, a copy of Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. This was the library and this the familiar reading of several generations.

There are three other important writings by Bunyan: *Grace Abounding*, which preceded *Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War* and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* which were written later. Of *The Holy War* it has been said that were it not for *Pilgrim's Progress* it would be the greatest English allegory; *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, intended by its author for a companion picture to that of his dream-allegory, has been deemed inferior as literature to *Pilgrim's Progress*, although its pictures of the vices of the age have important historical value. The historian Froude much admired it.

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*Pilgrim's Progress*. Everyman's Library.

*Bunyan's Holy War, and The Heavenly Footman*: Ed., by Mabel Peacock, 1892.

*The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*: Ed., with illustrations, by G. W. and L. Rhead. 1900. Facs. ed. by J. Brown. 1905.



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*Puritan and Anglican*: E. Dowden. 1900.  
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## ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)

Camb. Hist. Eng Lit., vol. VII, chap. VII.

Marvell, a Puritan poet but with a Puritanism considerably moderated by a mind able to feel sympathy for opponents, was hardly known to his contemporaries as a poet, for his complete poems were not published until after his death. A few poems had appeared here and there, but in his own day Marvell was known principally for his part in the controversies and affairs of state.

His best poems were written during the period from 1650 to 1652 while he was tutor to the daughter of Lord Fairfax, the Cromwellian general. The most admired of these poems is the \*\*\* *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*, which contains the famous sympathetic stanzas descriptive of Charles' bearing upon the scaffold. More in the tradition of the nature-loving English poets is \*\*\* *Thoughts in a Garden*. The reader will not neglect either the \*\*\* *Song of the Emigrants in Bermuda*, composed later than the other two. It is descriptive of the experiences of those who were exiled to Bermuda, martyrs to their consciences. \*\*\* *To His Coy Mistress* and \*\*\* *The Mower to the Glow-worms* should also be included to complete one's reading of his best poems.

During the reign of Charles II Marvell wrote several satires in verse upon affairs of state, together with a long series of Newsletters in prose, addressed to his constituents (he was then an M. P.) on the doings in Parliament.

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 See also Wordsworth's Sonnet "Great Men have been among us," 1802.  
 The first three poems mentioned in this section are in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, first series.



## SIR THOMAS BROWNE (1605-1682)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VII, chap. X.

One of the great prose writers of the seventeenth century was the doctor of medicine, Sir Thomas Browne. He is a classic not alone because of his style, but because he may to-day be read by a contemplative mind with the greatest of pleasure and enjoyment for the matter of his books. Of the three best known to-day, the most widely read is without question \*\*\* *Religio Medici* (1643 1st authorized ed.) or the religion of a doctor.

In an age of bitter controversies, of a total lack of toleration for the opinions of opponents, Browne is neither controversial nor intolerant. The purpose of the book seems to have been to clear doctors, or at least himself, from the imputation of atheism so often laid upon the followers of this profession. Browne announces himself at the beginning a Christian—but a tolerant one. With a curious “agreeable melancholy” Browne argues, not always consistently but always with a compelling fascination, for the right to believe what he believes, and emerges a mystic who is also a scientist. His style is rhythmical, highly coloured, and in one sense odd,<sup>1</sup> but it is readable always, and actually represents an important further development of English prose. Some of the peculiarities of his style that have troubled readers are not so apparent in *Religio Medici*.

\* *Hydriotaphia, or Urn Burial* (1658) which begins as a piece of antiquarian learning occasioned by the discovery of some Roman funeral-urns, proceeds as an inquiry into various ways of disposing of the dead, and ends with moralizing the spectacle of earthly ambition with its desire “to subsist in lasting monuments.”

The third of his important works was entitled *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646), but is usually known by the title \* *Vulgar Errors*. The book ranges over an extraordinary number of

<sup>1</sup> I. e. unique and individual in manufacturing curious compound words from Latin and Greek.

fallacious beliefs, at the same time clinging to others as fallacious as they are remarkable for a man of Sir Thomas Browne's intellect. It is sufficient to add that the general reader may derive many hearty laughs from reading in this book.

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*Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth*: W. Hazlitt. Vol. v, ed. of 1902.  
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*Hours in a Library*: Sir Leslie Stephen. 4 vols.  
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## THOMAS FULLER (1608-1661)

Fuller is little read to-day, although he is a witty writer with a gift for narrative. His best known book is *The History of the Worthies of England*. Not much of his work is accessible in modern editions, but Charles Lamb's *Specimens from the Writings of Fuller* may be easily consulted in any complete edition of Lamb. *Selections* from Fuller have also been edited by A. Jessopp, 1892.

## IZAAK WALTON (1593-1683)

The English speaking world has agreed that Walton is one of the pleasantest persons one can meet between the covers of a book. The book, of all things, has for title \*\*\* *The Compleat Angler*, at first glance not seemingly a subject of universal interest. Who cares for a fisherman who unblushingly uses worms? Izaak Walton is the exception: he fishes with worms and no one holds this fact against him.

The reason is clear: we read *The Compleat Angler* not because we want to know about bait, but because we enjoy hearing Walton talk about things in general. No man ever wandered more happily from his subject. Besides Walton himself, there



are other pleasant characters strolling about outdoors in some of the most delightful parts of rural England—Hertfordshire, for example. It is a book of holiday moods and holiday airs, of peace and quiet. It is as restful to read as it would be to spend a Saturday afternoon along the Itchen with St. Catherine's Hill above and the tower of Winchester Cathedral behind one—for there is Hampshire as well as Hertfordshire in the book.

Not so well known to the general reader are the brief biographies Walton wrote. The most important of these are the lives of \*\* *John Donne* and \*\* *George Herbert*, which should be read in connection with the poetry these men wrote.

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*The Compleat Angler*. Everyman's Library.

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*Latest Literary Essays*: J. R. Lowell. 1890-2. See Walton.

## THOMAS HOBBS (1588-1679)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VII, chap. XII.

Four great English philosophers are Bacon, Hobbes, Berkeley, and Hume. All of these men had minds that had some of the elements that we regard as characteristically English, and all wrote a style which brought them into the ranks of literature and at the same time made what they had to say available for the general reader who can claim no special knowledge of, or training in, philosophy. To these four must be added the name of Locke, who is the greatest of all as a philosopher, but not so easy for the general reader to grasp.

\*\*\* *Leviathan* (1651) is Hobbes' greatest book. The *Leviathan* is his figure for "that mortal God" whose generation and power the book describes. Hobbes presents a whole view of human life and the social order. His thesis is that there is, politically, no alternative between absolute rule and social anarchy. All things



“have but one universal cause, which is motion.” According to his view, even the “motions of the mind” have physical causes; the appetites and the passions of our minds must be restrained by some power to prevent them from making war on each other. Thus men in a state of anarchy (their first condition) turn to a power, create, that is to say, by a social contract, the State, and later still, learn to curb their passions by the power of their reason. In this absolute State in which men take refuge by mutual agreement, Hobbes further believed that the king should be supreme over the church as well as over the body politic. Such views made enemies for Hobbes among all factions, but his importance in the development of modern thought may not be overlooked, and, moreover, the ease and simplicity of his style make him enjoyable and thought-compelling reading.

*Hobbes*: Sir Leslie Stephen. 1904.

*Hobbes*: A. E. Taylor. 1909.

*Leviathan*: Everyman's Library.

## JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VIII, chap. 1.

Dryden, poet, critic and dramatist, is not so well known to the general reader of to-day as he ought to be. One reason, perhaps, is that some of his best poems, the political satires, require for their full appreciation a knowledge of the history and politics of the complex period of The Restoration; another reason is that his poetry is totally unlike that of the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century, for Dryden's poetry is written with polish and restraint, and has more intellectual than emotional appeal. Like other writers of his time, he demands and expects a sophisticated public more interested in ideas and problems than in sensation or feeling. Again, that he could write in praise of Cromwell and turn to welcome Charles II with fulsome flattery, or pass from the Church of England into that of Rome, are facts

that have had a tendency to set up a prejudice against his character. When all is said and done, however, Dryden remains, after Milton, the great literary figure of his age, a man who perfected the heroic rhymed couplet and who brought English prose and English criticism a long way forward. For these reasons, together with pleasure possibly unexpected by the general reader to be found in him, he deserves the attention of our age.

Upon the death of Cromwell, Dryden published in 1659 his \*\*\* *Heroic Stanzas: Consecrated to the Memory of his Highness Oliver*. The poem is in alternate rhymed lines, not in his famous heroic couplet. It is simple and direct, two qualities characteristic of all his poetry, although his simple, direct phrases have not left as many quotations in our language as one might expect. Examples of this simplicity and directness are frequent in this first of his important poems: "His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone"; or note the line

"And yet dominion was not his design."

\*\*\* *Astraea Redux*, a year later, celebrates in heroic rhymed couplets the return of Charles. That a poet should be caught by an unexpected turn of the political tide is not strange; that he should eagerly swim in the changed direction has seemed to some an unpardonable sin. Many men are ever eager to urge others to become martyrs while these persuaders themselves sit at ease in their own libraries. But Dryden's principles or political moralities are not here in question. The tribute to Charles does mention, along with its somewhat professional flattery, his principal good quality, "mildness." The passage, ll: 47-58, although meant as a flattering prophecy, has come true by time.

The next few years were occupied with writing plays, to which reference will later be made in this section, and his next poem \* *Annus Mirabilis*, or *The Year of Wonders* (1666) was published in 1667. This was the year of the naval warfare with Holland



and of the great fire of London, the two events being skillfully unified in the poem.

Drama and dramatic criticism occupied another interval before the publication in 1681 of his great political satire \* *Absalom and Achitophel*. The following year a second part was issued, but the first is the more important, and is complete in itself. The complex political situation which is the background of this poem must be read in history. Absalom is the king's son, the Duke of Monmouth, Achitophel, Shaftesbury, the Whig minister, and the political question at issue concerned succession to the throne, whether the successor were to be a Roman Catholic or an Anglican. The satire is carried through the parallel suggested by an episode in the *Old Testament*. The poem is a brilliant piece of work, particularly in diction, versification, and characterization.

In 1682 came *Religio Laici*, or *A Layman's Faith*, a personal poem in which Dryden is trying to think out his attitude toward religion. This poem preceded his entry into the Church of Rome, and for this reason he later suppressed it, since in it he states most unequivocally his objection to an authority that rests its claim upon infallibility:—

“For my salvation must its doom receive,  
Not from what others, but what I, believe.”

The Scriptures, in spite of errors of transmission and translation, are after all, the final refuge for a man's conscience since “God would not leave mankind without a way.”

After his conversion to the Church of Rome Dryden wrote his longest original poem, \* *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), an allegory of the Roman (the Hind) and the Anglican (the Panther) churches. Critics speak unfavourably of the allegory,<sup>1</sup> but all are agreed as to the excellence and beauty of individual passages. (See especially ll: 316–346.)

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Samuel Johnson, for example.



Two other poems of majestic beauty remain to be mentioned before turning to Dryden's plays. These are \*\*\* *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687) and \*\*\* *Alexander's Feast; or The Power of Music* (1697) another song in honour of the patron saint of music.

Of all the number of Dryden's plays, the modern reader will be interested at the most in one or two, and not at all in any of his comedies. \* *The Conquest of Grenada* (1672) has interest for students of the drama, for it is an experiment in the use of the heroic couplet in drama, and in romantic tragi-comedy. Dryden's one great play, however, is \*\*\* *All for Love, or The World Well Lost* (1678), a tragedy intended to rival Shakespeare in theme (the story of Antony and Cleopatra) and in the writing of blank verse. Further, Dryden aimed in this tragedy to show how the "rules of drama" should be applied to this subject, and therefore he has preserved the unities of time, place, and action, the three cardinal points of the "rules." *All for Love* is, questions of theory apart, a great dramatic poem, although it lacks the colour and glow of Shakespeare.

Finally, as a specimen both of his prose and of his powers as a critic *The Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) should be read.

\* *Life*: G. Saintsbury. 1881. (English Men of Letters series.)

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*The English Heroic Play*: L. N. Chase. 1909.

\* *Selections*: Ed., by W. D. Christie, 5th ed., rev. by C. H. Firth.

Contains: *Death of Cromwell; Astraea Redux; Annus Mirabilis, Absalom and Achitophel; Religio Laici; The Hind and the Panther.*

*Poems*: Cambridge edition. Complete poetical works. ✓

\* *Essays on Dramatic Poesy, and Kindred Subjects*. Everyman's Library. ✓

\* *All for Love in Restoration Plays*. Everyman's Library. ✓

\* *Essays*, Selected and Edited by W. P. Ker. 2 vols., 1900. ✓

## SAMUEL BUTLER (1612-1680)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. viii, chap. ii.

Butler's \*\*\* *Hudibras* (1st pt. 1663; 2d, 1664; 3d, 1678) is a satirical epic poem which directed its shafts of ridicule against the

Presbyterians and all of the other numerous factions of the dissenting sects. It is a royalist poem which appeared after the Restoration of Charles II and it exhibits very clearly the difference between Roundhead and Cavalier. The Cavalier had all the sophisticated wit and cleverness of the age and a sense of humour that blinded him to his own defects; the Roundhead was handicapped by no sense of humour and had besides the relentless efficiency that is the product of emotional fervour. Let Butler rail his hardest at his Presbyterian knight, Sir Hudibras, and let the reader laugh his heartiest at the joke, but all the while in the background there rumbles on steadily the deep tones of Milton's voice. In the end the greater music, greater because of the depth of emotional power that went to its making, prevails. Men still read Milton; they have to be reminded to read *Hudibras*.

The setting of the poem is imitated from Cervantes's *Don Quixote*; the title comes from Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (II, 2, 17). Elements in the poem were contributed by the works of François Rabelais and the parody of Virgil's *Aeneid* by Scarron.

*Hudibras*: Ed. by A. R. Waller. Cambridge English Classics. There is also a Riverside edition of this poem.

*Puritan and Anglican*: E. Dowden. 1900. See Butler.

## Quakers

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VIII, chap. IV.

Of particular interest to American readers is some knowledge of the literature of the Quakers, the religious sect founded by George Fox (1624-1691), and in which William Penn (1644-1718) of Pennsylvania was so conspicuous a figure.

George Fox's \* *Journal* (1660) is in itself literature, apart from its importance as a historical document and a record of religious experience. A revised edition of his *Journal* was published in two volumes in 1902-3.

William Penn's \* *Some Fruits of Solitude* has been edited with



an introduction by Sir Edmund Gosse, 1901, and again by J. Clifford, 1905.

*The Story of Quakerism:* E. B. Emmott, 1908. Official publication by the Society of Friends.

### Restoration Comedy

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VIII, chaps. v, vi, vii.

On the second of September, 1642, the Puritans put into effect an ordinance closing the theatres. With the passage of this regulation the first and greatest period of English drama was brought to an end. In spite, however, of this law a certain amount of "bootleg" drama was surreptitiously performed but under the conditions no important new plays could be expected. Dramatic art as an art ceased during the interregnum. Before the close of the Puritan régime, the law seems not to have been so strictly enforced for in 1656 Sir William D'Avenant, reputed by tradition to have been Shakespeare's godson, produced his play *The Siege of Rhodes*, "a representation by the art of perspective in scenes and the story sung in recitative music."

The importance of this play is that with its performance a new era began for the English stage. The open-air platform stage of the Elizabethan had now ceased to exist, and in Mr. Gordon Craig's phrase, "the drama went indoors." That is, plays were now performed in a closed building on a curtain stage lit by artificial lights and before painted scenery. Thus the modern theatre, as we know it to-day, including women players, dates from the first performance of *The Siege of Rhodes*. Women actors were now regularly to make their appearance, and boys were no longer to perform the female rôles.

It is true that painted scenery had earlier been used in masques and in one or two other experiments; that a woman, Mrs. Coleman, had appeared in *The First Day's Entertainment* at Rutland House, a music-drama also by D'Avenant, but the essential difference is that following *The Siege of Rhodes* scenery and women players



were the rule and not the experimental exception. That ladies had often taken part in court masques in the times of Elizabeth and James is a fact that has nothing to do with the history of the professional theatre.

Upon the arrival in London of General Monck bringing the earliest days of the Restoration, 1659-60, three dramatic companies immediately applied for licenses, which were granted. When Charles II came in, the licenses were, after a dispute, reduced to two, Killigrew's and Sir William D'Avenant's, and a royal monopoly in drama established which was to endure for many years. But the theatre was once more restored and recognized by the Court, and dramatists had now a legitimate outlet for their work.

Both D'Avenant and Killigrew wrote plays for their new theatres, but except for students of the drama, there is nothing in their work to recommend to the general reader. The two managements revived many of the masterpieces of the Elizabethan stage, including Shakespeare,<sup>1</sup> "although many of his plays were strangely altered to suit the new taste for opera and music drama.

The most important dramatist of this period was, as has already been said, Dryden. The best of D'Avenant's plays \* *Love and Honour*, anticipates the romantic tragi-comedy form developed by Dryden.

The Restoration dramatists will now be taken up individually, including, however, only those likely to please or interest the general reader.

John Wilson (1627?-1696) was an imitator of the comedies of Ben Jonson, particularly of *The Alchemist* and of Jonson's array of cheats and gulls. Wilson's most popular comedy \* *The Cheats* (1662) may still be read without too much fatigue.

Sir George Etherege (1635?-1691) has been the subject of debate among scholars concerning his true importance in the

<sup>1</sup>See Allardyce Nicoll: *Dryden as an Adaptor of Shakespeare*. 1922.

history of English drama, but the general reader will laugh heartily at *The Man of Mode or Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676), without any worry concerning vexed questions of scholarship, such as Etherege's possible indebtedness to Molière. The comedy is laid in London and the characters are the idolators of fashion. The whole is written with a most amusing flippancy, and Sir Fopling is the founder (with Hamlet's friend Osric) of a long line of "silly asses" on the stage.

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*The Works of Sir George Etherege*: ed., by H. F. B. Brett-Smith, 1927.

William Wycherley (1640?–1716) brought comedy to the lowest point of degradation that the English stage has witnessed. It is true that he had predecessors in this art in Dryden and Mrs. Aphra Behn, but Wycherley's work is worse because it is written with skill and remarkable literary power. He is a great writer, although he chose to write filth.

Not only does \*\*\* *The Country Wife* (a comedy that the squeamish reader will not venture to read aloud in the family circle) reflect the intense enjoyment of the followers of Charles II in the only joke many of them seem to have appreciated, but it also relates dramatically the quest for the only object that appears to have been worth a Restoration gentleman's efforts. Nevertheless, the comedy has such vigour and power, such wit of epigram and is such a total negation of all decency that it succeeds with a reader by its sheer force and skill. It is a masterpiece of the pornographic, (1675).

For savagery of satire one can go no further than Wycherley went in \* *The Plain Dealer* (1681). Should the reader survive the first of Wycherley's plays here recommended, he is advised to go on to *The Plain Dealer*.

*Plays*: Ed., by W. C. Ward. Mermaid Series, 1888.  
*The Country Wife* is also in *Restoration Plays*. Everyman's Library.



## WILLIAM CONGREVE (1670-1729)

Congreve stands apart in English comedy as a man having only one master in the art, and that man Shakespeare, who wrote a different kind of comedy. Congreve can draw people, invent situations in which to place them, write for them the most polished and witty prose, and yet have the whole like life. Further, he shows that not all the people of this world are obsessed solely with the Restoration quest of sex. After Wycherley the wit of Congreve seems almost like stern morality, for Congreve has no grossness in his nature. As there were none to compare with Congreve in his own day, so has he had few rivals since, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who is a lesser man, George Meredith, who wrote his comedies of manners as novels, and George Bernard Shaw, who came near but did not quite come level with Congreve in one play *Candida*.

\*\*\* *The Way of the World* (1700) is a comedy that comes as near perfection considered either as literature or as a stage play as one has any reason to expect. Mrs. Millamant is a civilized lady, a woman of beauty and charm, who at the same time has cleverness and intelligence. Only to be compared with her are Shakespeare's Beatrice and Meredith's Diana. About her play a group of characters in, it is true, an involved and complex plot, but who are all pawns for the perfect comedy. The plot does not really matter. Mrs. Millamant so dazzles us with her wit and beauty that we early give up any attempt to fathom the story. She is enough.

Only less, because *The Way of the World* is so much more, are \* *The Double Dealer* (1694) and \*\* *Love for Love* (1695). His first comedy *The Old Bachelor* (1693) is brilliant 'prentice work, and his one tragedy *The Mourning Bride* (1697) does not even approach the heights in tragedy that *The Way of the World* does in comedy. After these plays, he wrote no more drama. Mr. Congreve,



because of some perverse streak in his human nature, refused to admit himself a genius and retired to what he believed to be the loftier profession of young man-about-town.

*Life:* Sir Edmund Gosse. 1888.

*Plays:* Ed., by A. C. Ewald. Mermaid Series.

*The Country Wife* is also in *Restoration Plays*. Everyman's Library.

*An Essay on Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit:* G. Meredith. 1897.

*English Humourists of the 18th Century:* W. M. Thackeray. See Congreve and Addison.

Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1724) has earned our gratitude for the character of Lord Foppington in \* *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger* (1697) and in the same play bequeathed to the comic stage another perennial character, the tom-boy Miss Hoyden. Lord Foppington is an improvement upon Etherege's Sir Fopling Flutter, more amusing and more true. A third character in this comedy, Sir Tunbelly Clumsy is the stock-type of the hard drinking, sporting country squire. Should *The Relapse* please the reader he will find *The Provok'd Wife* (1697) and *The Confederacy* (1705) worth reading.

*Plays:* Ed., by A. E. H. Swaen, 1896. Mermaid Series.

*The Provok'd Wife* is in *Restoration Plays*. Everyman's Library.

### GEORGE FARQUHAR (1678-1707)

The comedies of Farquhar do not have their scenes laid exclusively in the world of fashion of the Town, but move from the roadside inn to the isolated country house, or follow the recruiting sergeant's drum on its travels. In characters, too, there are all types, high and low, from young men of fashion who are, nevertheless, nearing the end of their exchequer, and high-born ladies to inn-keepers, highwaymen, and soldiers. There is in short in his comedies a wealth of colour and a canvas crowded with pictures and sketches. Something of the panorama of life that Fielding recorded a generation later in *Tom Jones* passes across Farquhar's stage. His comedies, therefore, are both

pleasant reading and essential documents in the history of the development of the English novel.

Two comedies in particular are recommended: \*\*\* *The Beaux' Stratagem* and \*\* *The Recruiting Officer*. The first will be found in *Restoration Plays*, Everyman's Library; the second in The Mermaid Series of his plays, edited by W. Archer, 1908.

Colley Cibber (1671-1757), actor, playwright, and true man of the theatre has left us one work more interesting than his comedies, and that is \*\* *An Apology* (1740) for his life. This is one of the best theatrical memoirs ever written. All readers who like the theatre will find in it a wealth of material concerning the stage of the period, together with vivid pen portraits of the actors and other persons who contributed their parts to its history. An inexpensive edition of *An Apology* for his life will be found in Everyman's Library. In 1889 R. W. Lowe published in two volumes an annotated and illustrated edition of this work. It can be found in the larger libraries.

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*Scenes and Machines on the English Stage during the Renaissance*: L. B. Campbell, 1923.

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*Types of English Drama, 1660-1780*: D. H. Stevens. 1923.

(Twenty-one representative plays.)

#### Restoration Tragedy

The most important tragedy of this period, as has already been said, was Dryden's *All for Love*. At the close of the Eliza-



bethan Age tragedy had degenerated more and more under an increasing load of horrors; when the new age began with the return of Charles II, the French theories of tragedy, the so-called "rules" were imported, and lesser men succumbed to the deadening influence of the rigid mechanism demanded by these "rules." Further, the frivolous world of the court had little taste for serious themes. The famous command of Charles II, that, during his reign, he wished "all tragedies to end happily" is an illustration of the taste of the court. Nahum Tate (1652-1715), for example, succeeded in devising a happy ending of sorts for Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Nevertheless, some tragedies continued to be written and of these, a very few may still be read without too great a feeling of boredom.

One of these tragedies was admired by Lord Byron, \*\* *Venice Preserved* (1682) by Thomas Otway (1652-1685), a play that has some "tender" passages of tragic poetry, but the tragedy is sentimentalized, not, however, to the point of being unreadable. For the "comic relief" in this play, nothing favourable can be said. The character of Jaffier, on the other hand, is a true portrait of a weak man torn between love, patriotic feeling and loyalty to his friends. The acting possibilities of this play kept it in the stock repertory of the theatre until the middle of the nineteenth century. It is included in *Restoration Plays*, Everyman's Library. Almost equally popular on the stage was Otway's *The Orphan* (1680), but it is no longer read save by specialists in the drama. These two plays bound together have been edited by C. F. McClumpha, 1909, Belle-Lettres series. In *Seventeenth Century Studies*, Sir Edmund Gosse has written one of his customary delightful critical essays on Otway.

*The Rival Queens* (1677) by Nathaniel Lee (1653?-1692) is included here for the reason that this play was long famous in the theatre and the rôle of Alexander the Great in it one of the favourite characters of the great actors John Philip Kemble and



Edmund Kean. Theatre-lovers will want therefore to read this tragedy.

There is but little more to recommend to the reader from the drama of this period. For the curious, the following plays are suggested, in addition to those already enumerated.

John Crowne (d. 1703), *Sir Courtly Nice* (1685), a comedy; Thomas Southerne (1660–1746), *The Fatal Marriage* (1694) and *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave* (1696), an adaptation of Mrs. Aphra Behn's novel, *Oroonoko*; Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718), *The Fair Penitent* (1703) and *The Tragedy of Jane Shore* (1714). All of these were popular stock pieces and held the stage for many years.

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### The Court Poets

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VIII, chap. VIII.

In the circle of Charles II were many gallant wits and courtiers who amused themselves at times with writing verse. As might be expected under these circumstances and from men devoted to the pose of flippancy imposed on all who sought the favour of Charles, such poetry varies from bad to good. Not every man who tried to show his wit had wit to show; some clever men likewise wrote carelessly or hastily; others again have left us a pleasant anthology of their verses, which fits in and completes the pictures of the times we have in the dramas, diaries, memoirs, and history of the age.

Dryden belonged to this circle and was greater than any of them, but what has already been said of him need not be repeated. Next to him, stands John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1648–1680).

To Rochester, as to the others with the exception of Dryden, the writing of poetry was not a serious business. His life at court

with its adventurous intrigues, falling in and out of the King's favour, was his true occupation. The incredible adventures of Rochester's life, with his disguisings and endless fertility in discovering daring things to do, are a fascinating chapter in social history. Rochester's way of life and the sharpness of his satire shocked even his contemporaries, including Mr. Pepys; in a later age, Dr. Johnson took a very stern view of him, but for all that some of his poetry is readable and his adventures will still amaze the sedentary. The reader must be on his guard against being "put off" by Rochester's cynicism. It goes with his pose. Unfortunately there is not much of his poetry accessible in modern editions.

The poems suggested are: *A Satire against Mankind; I Cannot Change; Love and Life; To his Mistress; The Maim'd Debauchee*. Finally, it was Rochester who wrote the famous epitaph on Charles II:—

"Here lies our Sovereign Lord the King,  
Whose word no man relies on,  
Who never said a foolish thing,  
Nor ever did a wise one."

*The Collected Works of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester:* ed., by J. Hayward. 1927.

Sir Charles Sedley (1639?–1701) tried his hand as a dramatist, but Mr. Pepys found Sedley's conversation more entertaining than his comedy *The Mulberry Garden*. A tragedy or two he wrote, including an *Anthony and Cleopatra* in rhymed bathos, but for all this he has left two or three songs which excuse the rest. These are: \* *Child and Maiden* and \*\* *Not, Celia, that I juster am*, in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*; and \*\*\* *Phyllis is my only joy*, in *Shakespeare to Thomas Hardy*, edited by Robert Lynd, 1922.

A poet lavishly praised and flattered by Dryden and Prior was Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset (1638–1708). The present age is not so critically kind to his

memory as were his contemporaries, nevertheless he wrote one delightful song "*To all you ladies now at hand*," a true ballad in form and rhythm. It will be found in J. M. Manly's *English Poetry*, 1907. He is generally avoided by present-day anthologists.

The others of this group of Court Poets may be passed over by the general reader without any particular loss to his acquaintance with the English poets.

### Memoirs and Letter Writers

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. III, chap. X.

Our knowledge of the seventeenth century, of its personalities and its social life, is particularly rich thanks to the existence of two diaries, those of John Evelyn and of Samuel Pepys. Apart from their historical value both of these diaries are literature and fascinating reading to boot, especially that of Mr. Pepys. These writings did not reach the public until early in the nineteenth century, but since then have been the pleasurable reading of all who have had the good fortune to open them. Of the two, the more interesting and amusing is that of Mr. Pepys, who wrote only for his own eye, and mixed with his recorded doings the most naïve and human of confessions. Neither diarist should be neglected, however, although Mr. Pepys will be the more constant companion.

John Evelyn (1620–1706) was a typical English country gentleman, cultured and active in the affairs of the world. His diary is a record of the whole history of his life, beginning with his birth in 1620. The earlier portions, obviously, are of later composition, but through the middle and late years the record is made from day to day. He was a royalist, a fact which sent him travelling upon the Continent during the troublous days, and thus part of his diary is a record of his journey. The perils of travelling over the passes of the Alps impressed him more than did the beauty of the scenery. It is not until near our own times that



the Alps come in for the extravagant praise that is now among the commonplaces of travel literature. In 1652 he settled down in England, after ten years of travel, for the rest of his life. For a time he was occupied with domestic life and the planting of gardens upon his estate.

He was elected a member of the newly founded Royal Society, for the advancement of science and knowledge, in 1660, and from the Restoration on was busied with public affairs. At this point his diary begins to parallel that of Pepys. A problem of great importance at this time was the supply of timber, particularly oak, for the building of the navy. The Royal Society entrusted Evelyn with the problem and he dealt with it in *Sylva* (1664), a work which did much to stimulate the planting of trees. His public services included also heavy responsibilities during the plague year, 1665. But the diary reveals not only an able and public-spirited man of affairs; the private character of the man that shines through it is likewise revealed, a character which cannot fail to hold a reader's attention.

The most convenient edition of Evelyn's \*\*\* *Diary* is the Globe, 1908, and a two volume edition of it is also in Everyman's Library.

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), wrote his diary in an intricate and puzzling short hand, with the result that the manuscript lay unnoticed among the books he had bequeathed to the library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, until it was finally deciphered in 1822. With the deciphering of the manuscript a new and until then unknown figure was suddenly presented to literature and history.

The fact that the diary was not intended to be read by any other than the recorder of it is what lends a peculiar interest to this work. Probably no other man has ventured quite so frankly and freely to put himself down in the habit as he lived, or to

confess so truthfully his human frailties and weaknesses. Nevertheless, the Mr. Pepys of the Navy office survives amazingly the most damaging self-revelations to emerge a man of importance, patriotically devoted to his country and to his task in the administration of naval affairs.

The diary opens on January 1, 1660, and the last entry is that of May 31, 1669, when his eyesight failing him, he relinquished both his diary and his office at the same time, although he lived, not entirely blind, for thirty-three years more. The diary coincides with the years of his various positions in the Navy office.

The interest of the diary remains, however, in Pepys's comments on people of importance with whom he came in contact, on his wife and sister, on the theatres he visited, on the books he read, on his love of music, and above all, on himself. During the plague, Pepys did not run away but stuck at his post, as did John Evelyn. Finally, Mr. Pepys gives us as an eye-witness an account of the great fire of London. In short, pick up the book and open it anywhere at random, and absorbing reading will be found.

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*Samuel Pepys*: Percy Lubbock. 1909.

*Samuel Pepys, Administrator, Observer, Gossip*: E. H. Moorehouse. 1909.

*Familiar Studies of Men and Books*: R. L. Stevenson, 1906. See Samuel Pepys.

*Samuel Pepys and the World He Lived In*: H. B. Wheatley. 1880.

*The Real Pepys*: C. Whibley. 1900.

In 1713 was published in French at Cologne the anonymous *Mémoires de la Vie du Comte de Gramont*, the author of which was Anthony Hamilton (1646?-1720), who was the intimate friend of Gramont after the latter's arrival in England. It is a matter of



dispute how much of these memoirs were dictated to Hamilton by Gramont, and how much the book is Hamilton's own. The memoirs may not be historically accurate in every detail, nevertheless they turn a ruthless light upon the Court of Charles II and the pageant of his mistresses, and the general picture they paint is undoubtedly true. In any event, the book should be read by all to whom this age and the Restoration drama are of interest.

\*\* An English translation has been edited by G. Goodwin, in 2 vols, 1903.

#### MISCELLANEOUS MEMOIRS

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VII, chap. IX.

*The Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, written by himself. Ed. by Sir S. Lee, new ed., 1906.

Robert Carey, Earl of Monmouth (1560-1639). *Memoirs*. Ed. by G. H. Powell, 1905. King's Classics series.

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#### JOHN LOCKE (1632-1704)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. VIII, chap. XIV.

Locke is one of the most important names in English philosophy and in the origins of the science of psychology. But the general reader need not be alarmed by his reputation in these profound studies, for he will find the \*\* *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), one of the books he will want to know. The purpose of the essay is "to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with." In other words, he made a systematic study of human understanding in order to determine the truth and certainty of human knowledge.

The Essay is divided into four books. In the first, he rejects the doctrine of "innate ideas"—i.e., that we possess *a priori* certain ideas, and substitutes for this theory his belief that all our ideas are born of experience. The second book deals with



ideas and their nature. Ideas are in part derived from sense impressions and in part from reflection operating upon the products of experience. The third book is concerned with the problem of the origins of knowledge. General knowledge, he holds, is derived from our knowledge of particulars. In the fourth book he applies the results of his reasoning to determine the nature and extent of knowledge. He held that "the real existences to which knowledge extends are self, God, and the world of nature." Although the problems discussed by Locke cannot, as he believed, be entirely disposed of by his method of plain, common sense, expressed in the simple language of the market-place, nevertheless his Essay has a thought-compelling effect upon the reader and to have studied it is to have encountered a new experience.

*The Essay concerning Human Understanding* has been edited by A. C. Fraser, 1894. \*\* Another edition, abridged, has been prepared by A. S. Pringle-Pattison, 1924. In Everyman's Library is published Locke's \* *Two Treatises of Civil Government*, a refutation of the doctrine of absolute power and the problem of the liberty of the citizen in its relation to political order. T. Fowler's *Life of Locke*, is in the English Men of Letters series, 1880. \* *Some Thoughts concerning Education*, edited by R. H. Quick, 1898.

### Miscellaneous Authors of the Seventeenth Century

Among the by-paths of reading in this century is the *Table Talk of John Selden* (1584-1654), the record of twenty years of conversation on many subjects by a great legal mind set down by R. Milward. The title-page informs us that the "matters of weight" concerning which Selden talked relate "especially to Religion and State." The contents of the book are not so formidable as the title implies, for Selden is a witty and wise talker on

many subjects. The most recent editions are that of I. Gollancz, 1899, and of Sir F. Pollock, 1927.

*Camp. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. VIII, chap. XIII, pp. 367-374.

Sir William Temple (1628-1699), in whose service Jonathan Swift began his career, has left some essays for the modern wanderer in a library, three of which may be had in reprinted editions, *Upon the Garden of Epicurus*, edited by G. F. Sieveking, 1908, with which are included other seventeenth century essays on gardens, and *Essays on Ancient and Modern Poetry* and *On Poetry*, edited by J. E. Spingarn, 1909. See also Macaulay's essay on Sir William Temple.

*Camp. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. VIII, chap. XVI, pp. 434-442.

For readers interested in the development of criticism, the collection of essays edited by J. E. Spingarn entitled *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century* is suggested.

The narrative of the development of science from Bacon through the remainder of the seventeenth century is difficult outside the walls of a great library. C. R. Wald's *A History of the Royal Society*, 2 vols., 1848, has not been reprinted. On the other hand, Sir Robert Boyle's (1627-1691), *Sceptical Chymist*, with an introduction by M. M. Pattison Muir, is in Everyman's Library. Hobbes, Sir Thomas Browne, and Locke have already been referred to. William Harvey's (1578-1657), *Motion of the Heart and Blood* is in Everyman's Library. This is one of the epoch making books in medical science, by the discoverer of the circulation of the blood. The work of Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), discoverer of the law of gravitation and great mathematician, is discussed in histories of England, and in chapter IV of O. Elton's *The Augustan Age*, 1899.

For a general account of the progress of science, see H. T. Buckle's *Introduction to the History of Civilization in England*, 2 vols., 1857-61, new edition by J. M. Robertson, 1904, and H. D.

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For an account of the writers of these essays, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. VII, chap. XI.

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## The Eighteenth Century

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*History of Agriculture and Prices in England, 1259-1793*: J. E. T. Rogers. 8 vols., 1866-1902.  
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### DANIEL DEFOE (1661?-1731)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. I.

There is no more amazingly prolific writer in all English literature than the journalist and pamphleteer Defoe. It is difficult to conceive how one man could have turned out and printed the quantity of words that he did, but the bibliography is there and not only must be believed, but it is also certain that many more items could be added to it, were it only possible to trace and identify all of the anonymous material written by Defoe. His relation to journalism belongs, however, to the history of the newspaper, and most of his tracts and pamphlets concern only the student of history.

The general reader knows, of course, the first part of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and is aware that there are other works of Defoe that he will read some day, but perhaps he has no specific list of these in his mind.

\*\*\* *Robinson Crusoe* is the first adventure novel in English, but apart from a reader's natural delight in adventure, the book is a triumph of Defoe's literary imagination. What makes it so is his power of visualizing for the reader the minute details of his events, seemingly recording what only an eye-witness could have noted. The result of these details is to give to his narrative an extraordinarily vivid dramatic quality, as for a single instance, Crusoe's discovery of the footprint in the sand.

\* *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1720), "a military journal of the wars in England and Germany," is again vivid as a narrative but lacks the universality of appeal that characterizes *Crusoe*.

In the same year appeared \*\* *The Life, Adventures, and Pyracies of the Famous Captain Singleton*, an adventure novel of the sea and of Africa certain to appeal to all who like such stories. The hero is a picturesque rogue whose adventures are illustrated with the same startling wealth of concrete detail which characterizes all Defoe's writings.

Most amazing of all his fictions, however, is \*\*\* *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), which purports to be a veracious diary of the day to day progress of the great plague in the preceding century. Again, it seems as if the author must have passed through the experiences he describes, so horribly realistic is this book in all its details. No other thoroughly unpleasant book so arouses one's interest and admiration for the author's skill.

Of his short narratives, the best known is his famous ghost-story *A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal* (1706). Again, his realistic method makes the story read like one of the transactions of a society for psychical research.

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Miscellaneous selections from Defoe will be found in R. M. Alden's *Readings in English Prose of the Eighteenth Century*, 1911, an excellent reference book for a reader who wishes to orient himself in the literature of this period.

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## SIR RICHARD STEELE (1672-1729)

AND

## JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. II.

These two writers are bracketed together not because they did all their work in collaboration, far from it in fact, but because together they represent and reflect in their writings the spirit of the age at the beginning of the eighteenth century. This spirit was different from that of the Restoration; the wild license of unchecked individualism had given place, except among a small group of aristocrats, to the sober common sense of a society largely composed of successful middle-class merchants in snuff-coloured suits. It is true the fashionable folk looked down contemptuously upon the City merchants, that the beaux and belles of the court circles still did extravagant things extravagantly while mocking the respectability of the bourgeois, but there were now too many prosperous merchants to be laughed out of countenance, particularly as laughter was a weapon against which the sober citizen was proof. In short, that formidable person, middle class Mr. John Bull, was now in a position to have his say, socially and politically; a man of stern morality, of practical common sense, who regarded life not as a jest but as a serious matter, who suspected and disliked the far-fetched conceits of culture, and who knew that society depended on profit and loss instead of on titles. He respected titles, for he was no theoretical democrat, this John Bull, but he also knew the power that lies in a cash-box, a power to be had only by careful attention to business and to the conventional decencies.



Sir Richard Steele<sup>1</sup> belonged to the old order and had a temperament that continually tried to make him give proof he was a cavalier, but his conscience (the possession of one by a man of his class being itself evidence of a new age) was enlisted on the side of morality, with many paradoxical results as far as his own character was concerned, but in his literary work he stood stoutly for the better cause. He is among the first of the large tribe of reformers who have been having their say and their way for the last two hundred and twenty-five years, only Dick Steele, unlike some of these "uplifting" gentry knew how to write, and much can be forgiven him on this score. Perhaps it was the cavalier in him that saved his artistic soul.

*The Christian Hero* (1701) he proclaimed "an argument proving that no principles but those of religion are sufficient to make a great man." Although it is not among Steele's writings that are much read to-day, the book is important for indicating what Steele had to say to his generation. His aristocratic friends took it as a proof that he was turning into a bore, but the book passed through several editions up through the first quarter of the next century.

Steele now turned to the drama as offering a better field for his missionary work, for the tradition of the stage was still that of Restoration manners, with cuckoldry for almost its universal theme. To Steele it seemed that the drama, and particularly comedy, could be used for a sentimental castigating of contemporary manners. His first play was \* *The Funeral, or Grief-a-la-Mode* (1701), a well-constructed comedy in which is exposed the false grief of a woman who believes her husband to be dead. She is, in fact, enjoying her inheritance of wealth and freedom, when her lord and master once more decides to return to life. \* *The Lying Lover* (1703) is a sermon against duelling and intemperance;

<sup>1</sup> See Thackeray's picture of him in *Henry Esmond*. The same, for Addison.

*The Tender Husband* (1705) is a less convincing picture of conjugal tenderness.

The Steele the modern reader likes, however, begins with his founding of *The Tatler* on April 12, 1709. It was a magazine appearing three times a week, each issue containing several essays, the whole designed to appeal to the middle-class public of the coffee-houses. Thus, as he announced in the first issue "all accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment, shall be under the article of White's Chocolate house; poetry, under that of Will's coffee-house; learning, under the title of the Grecian; foreign and domestic news, you will have from St. James's coffee-house; and what else I shall on any other subject offer, shall be dated from my own apartment."

The articles dated from his own apartment were those in which Steele attacked the social abuses of the age, particularly gambling, duelling, and swindling. Moral counsels he put into the mouth of "Isaac Bickerstaff," a pseudonymic character at first representing Steele himself, later evolving into a creation with an independent personality. Gradually, Steele covered the whole range of contemporary civilization and gave expression in popular form to the current ideas of the age. He succeeded because he reflected so accurately what men wished to have said concerning the questions they were thinking about. *The Tatler* ceased publication with the edition of January 2, 1711.

One of Steele's collaborators in *The Tatler* was the learned Joseph Addison, and it is necessary to say a few words about this new writer, for he is from now on the dominating partner in the firm of Addison and Steele.

Addison was a better writer than Steele, having more charm of style and much more to say. It is possible that it was in part the brilliance of Addison's contributions which produced in Steele the discouragement that caused him to give up *The Tatler*. Together, on March 1, 1711, Addison and Steele founded *The*



*Spectator*, a daily magazine, more literary in purpose, avoiding the medley of foreign and domestic news that had characterized Steele's first effort. The author was again figured as an imaginary character, "Mr. Spectator"; one of Mr. Spectator's friends created for him was the immortal Sir Roger de Coverly, the honest and kindly country-squire who has since been regarded as the model of the type. Other famous characters appeared in the pages of *The Spectator*, Will Honeycomb, the fop, and Sir Andrew Freeport, the City merchant, to name but two.

The de Coverly papers, taken as a whole, approach very nearly to being a novel of contemporary manners, but such novels were yet to be, and the total is only a series of character sketches. They are important in literature, however, for pointing out what the materials of the novel would be. Further, for modern readers they have an indescribable charm that places them among our favourite "classics." *The Spectator* ceased on December 6, 1712.

There remains to mention Addison's tragedy \*\* *Cato*, produced at Drury Lane on April 14, 1713, although much of it had been written ten years before. The tragedy is one of the few eighteenth century dramas written with a strict observance of "the rules" that is readable to-day. In its own time its success was much enhanced by the political allegory that both political parties read into it.

Steele's last important work, although he had founded other periodicals, notably *The Guardian*, to which Addison also contributed, was his comedy *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), more sentimental even than his earlier comedies, with satirical attacks once more on duelling, marriages of convenience, and the technicalities of the law. The other writings of these two, Addison and Steele, will not occupy the attention of the general reader.

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 Complete with those by Steele and Budgell.

## ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. III.

The importance of Pope as a poet has passed under a cloud of late as far as the general reader is concerned, for "popular" poetry for a long time now has been that of the nineteenth century romantic movement, a style of writing far removed from the polished intellectualism of Pope. But if the general reader can overcome his prejudice in favour of romanticism, or his preconceived idea that there is no "fire or passion" in Pope, he will have a pleasant surprise. Pope, it is true, is a literary writer and his appreciation demands on the part of his reader a liking for literature, but granting this elementary requirement for even a non-professional bookworm, the rest should be easy. Pope is a poet of sparkling wit, who can turn off with apparent ease scintillating epigrams that stick in the memory, and who also is capable of writing the most striking individual passages. Surely, here is enough to look into, if the reader goes no further. He is, moreover, *the* poet of his age, and his influence has extended on beyond his day as late, at least, as to the time of Lord Byron.

The selections from Pope that have been suggested in these pages are those most likely to engage the reader's attention, but once caught, it is believed that his interest will lead him in the end to regard the works of Alexander Pope as indispensable for a well-balanced library, works which will be read and consulted beyond the limits of the suggestions here set down. The order will not, therefore, be chronological.

\*\*\* *The Rape of the Lock* (first form 1712), a mock-heroic satire with all its wit is also a blend of delicate fancy. There is nothing quite like it in all English literature. It is the very quintessence of the cultured artificiality of the Augustan Age. He who cannot smile at Belinda and her Baron or appreciate the skill of the workmanship, is much to be pitied. Literature is not for him. No more can be said.

It is not so easy to be certain of the reader's pleasure in including other suggestions, so much depends on the force with which Pope's heroic-couplets continue to appeal to him. Some find them monotonous, but none can fail to note the epigrams struck off at intervals in his poems. \*\* *The Essay on Man* (1733-4) is a good illustration of his power in epigram and in individual passages. Note, for example, in Epistle I of this poem the familiar quotation "hope springs eternal in the human breast," and the passage on the blessing of our being unable to see the future, Epistle I, ll, 77-90. Other familiar quotations and other striking passages will be found in this poem, although one may perhaps smile at the general argument of the whole.

Of his satires \*\* *The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735), with its well-known passage on Addison, is the best with which to begin.

\* *The Essay on Criticism* (1711), compounded as it is of Horace, Vida and Boileau, sets forth, nevertheless, not only Pope's critical attitude but that of his day. The poem cannot be neglected by readers who wish to understand some things that happened to literature in the eighteenth century.



Finally, there is the great translation of Homer, \*\*\* *Iliad* (1714-1720) and *Odyssey* (1725-6). In the latter he shared the work with two other men. Although Pope's *Iliad* has many faults in its departures from the spirit of the original, it is a great work in itself, and is still a good means of access to Homer's epic for a reader who has no Greek. It is more readable but less poetic than Chapman's *Homer*<sup>1</sup>; not so great a piece of English literature as is the work of the Elizabethan translator, but more comprehensible to our present age. Pope's *Odyssey*, on the other hand, is not a success.

Pope was also the editor of an edition of Shakespeare, the first to begin that vast accumulation of notes upon the text which has to-day swollen to such proportions through the work of later commentators.

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- See also Lord Byron's *Letters and Journals*.

## JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. IV.

Swift was one of the keenest satirists and greatest masters of prose style that English literature has produced. And yet, by

<sup>1</sup> See p. 69.



some curious revenge of the whirligig of time he is thought of to-day by many persons as the man who wrote *Gulliver's Travels*, a book particularly appropriate to give to children at Christmas. Little do these worthy people know what it is necessary to cut out from Lemuel Gulliver's travels before they may be placed in the hands of the young.

Jonathan Swift, of English descent, was born in Ireland to a fierce pride and a debasing poverty, the two warring conditions of his existence that later made him so merciless a satirizer of human nature. He was a tutor in the household of Sir William Temple, where he was made to feel keenly his poverty and dependency. Swift's literary fame began, however, under these auspices, for this was when he wrote \*\* *The Battle of the Books* (not published until 1714). He grew in value to Sir William Temple, who at his death left Swift a legacy and made him his literary executor. Swift's subsequent career in the maze and mire of party politics may not be set down here, although all the events of his life were closely connected with his writings, and to understand the latter some knowledge of the former is essential.

\*\*\* *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) may be read, it is true, without reference to the elements of political and social satire in them, as adventure stories narrated in a bare, matter-of-fact style taught Swift by Defoe. Probably this is the best way to read them, for there is no escaping in the end the bitterness of the satire on human nature which reaches its climax of angry hatred of humanity in the voyage to the land of the horses. There is something awe-inspiring in the savagery of Swift's hatred, and although satire is more effective usually when a man writes it without losing his temper, Swift makes the reader feel almost a complete justification for his wrath. The ingratitude of princes, the abomination of war, the futility of religious controversies, the degradation of lies, all these and more Swift assails, yet, particularly through the earlier voyages, there flashes a clever wit

that sets the reader often on a roar of laughter—very cleansing and wholesome laughter, too. When he stoops to be coarse, he is uncompromisingly coarse, but one feels that here also he has a tonic purpose—to shake us out of our self-complacency over our conventions.

Another of his great satires is \*\*\* *A Tale of a Tub*, an early work published with *The Battle of the Books* in 1704. *A Tale of a Tub* is in part a satire on the quarrel of the churches. To this work Carlyle was indebted for his idea of the "clothes-philosophy" in *Sartor Resartus*. The satire reaches beyond that on religious quarrels to include all human nature.

One of his most amusing writings, which has of late been blanketed by forgetfulness, is *A Complete Collection of genteel and ingenious Conversation*, a satire on the conversation of "smart" society.

*An Argument against abolishing Christianity* (1708) is a masterpiece of irony, containing much wisdom concerning true and false religion.

The most bitter of his ironies is *A Modest Proposal* (1729) in which he suggests that the poverty and despair of the people of Ireland might be relieved by their selling their children as food for the rich.

\*\*\* *The Journal to Stella* is an intimate document of great value for its portrait of the author and for its historical significance. Stella was Esther Johnson for whom Swift composed this journal day by day while he was absent from her in London.

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### Lesser Verse Writers

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. VI.

#### MATTHEW PRIOR (1664-1721)

Prior had an involved ambassadorial and political career, many friends among the literati, and a neat gift for writing clever verses, together with a heavy hand for longer efforts in rhyme. He first attracted the attention of the wits by a parody of Dryden's *The Hind and The Panther*, entitled *The Country-Mouse and City Mouse*, but the modern reader will rest sufficiently content with a few examples of his cleverness. The *Golden Treasury* includes only one poem by him \*\**The Merchant, to secure his treasure*, perhaps the best example of his skill in light verse, but there is charm in \*\**To a Child of Quality Five Years Old*, smiles in \*\**A Simile* and \*\**The Remedy Worse Than the Disease*. Austin Dobson has edited a collection of *Prior's Selected Poems*, 1889, should the reader's appetite crave more. W. M. Thackeray has included him in a study of Gay and Pope in *Lectures on the English Humourists*.

#### JOHN GAY (1685-1732)

Gay is once more well known to the world thanks to the recent and successful revivals in England and America of his \*\**The Beggar's Opera* (1728), one of the first of the musical comedies, and with the exception of some of the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, the only clever one ever written.

After an early experiment or two as a poet, Gay came entirely under the influence of Pope and made an excursion into the pastoral form entitled *Rural Sports* (1713), on the model of Pope's pastorals, a poem absurdly stilted in language and not



very competent in its knowledge of the countryside. His next pastoral venture \* *The Shepherd's Week* (1714) was more successful. Intended as a parody of Ambrose Philips, these pastorals are amusing for their own sakes.

\*\*\* *Trivia, or The Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1715), in mock heroic style, may safely be recommended. It is a clever and interesting picture of the humours of street-life, not safe perhaps, in our squeamish days for reading aloud in mixed company, but good for solitary entertainment. In like manner his *Fables* (1727), seldom read now, will please the saunterer in a library. His poem *Mr. Pope's Welcome from Greece*, written on the occasion of the completion of Pope's translation of the *Iliad* has interest for the historian of English literature. His popular ballad, from one of his plays, *Black-Eyed Susan*, is also worth a glance.

Unfortunately, outside of *The Beggar's Opera*, modern editions of Gay do not exist. For this play, see the edition with illustrations by C. Lovat Fraser. Austin Dobson in 1882 edited an edition of *The Fables*, but for *Trivia* the reader will have to consult eighteenth century editions in the large libraries. *Black-Eyed Susan* is in *The Golden Treasury*. Brief selections from *The Shepherd's Week* are in Cunliffe, Pyre, and Young's *Century Readings in English Literature*; from *The Fan*, in J. M. Manly's *English Poetry*.

#### AMBROSE PHILIPS (1675-1749)

"Namby-Pamby" Philips, as Pope and his friends called this poet in one of the endless politico-literary quarrels of the day, has left a single poem for *The Golden Treasury*, *To Charlotte Pulteney, in Her Mother's Arms*; a tragedy *The Distressed Mother*, founded on Racine's *Andromaque*, now included in most collections of "representative drama;" and was, as a writer of pastorals, the cause of Gay's intended parody *The Shepherd's*

*Week*, and himself published the first collection of old ballads. Beyond this, the modern reader need know no more of him.

### THOMAS PARNELL (1679-1718)

Parnell must be mentioned for two reasons: Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson each gave him the dignity of a biography and the poet contributed a proverbial saying to our language. In *An Elegy to an Old Beauty* occur the lines:

“And all that’s madly wild, or oddly gay  
We call it only pretty Fanny’s way.”

Readers interested in the poems of the eighteenth century on death and graveyards will find the beginnings of this convention in Parnell’s *A Nightpiece on Death*. Three of his poems, including this one, are accessible in G. B. Woods: *English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement*, 1916, and in J. M. Manly: *English Poetry*. As the study of the romantic movement begins with a consideration of Parnell, students and readers interested will want to consult G. A. Aiken’s edition of his *Poetical Works*, 1894.

### ANNE FINCH, COUNTESS OF WINCHELSEA (d. 1720)

The poems of this lady are a comparatively modern discovery, for in her own age she seems to have been looked upon with more kindly indulgence than critical appreciation. But Wordsworth found some simplicity and love of nature in her work and E. Dowden in *Essays, Modern and Elizabethan*, 1910, and Sir Edmund Gosse in *Gossip in a Library*, 1891, assisted in proclaiming her discovery as one of the forerunners of romanticism. The modern reader may make up his own mind about her after reading *The Tree*, *To the Nightingale*, and *A Nocturnal Reverie*. They will be found in *English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement* by G. B. Woods, 1916.



## THOMAS TICKELL (1688-1740)

This satellite of Joseph Addison was a rival of Pope in translating Homer's *Iliad*, and thereby became a figure in the literary quarrels of the day. One is done with Tickell, however, when one has read his *Elegy on Addison*, a really noble poem. He was an editor of Addison's works, edition of 1721. A selection from *The Elegy on Addison* is in J. M. Manly's *English Poetry*.

## ISAAC WATTS (1674-1748)

Watts is remembered to-day as a writer of hymns, and one may never feel certain that admirers of hymns think of these sacred songs as poetry. Some of them are, however, when written by a Watts or a Wesley. But we are all familiar with his \*\*\* *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*, which is most assuredly a poem as well as a hymn. The same may be said of \*\*\* *The Day of Judgment (Dies Irae)*, \*\*\* *The Hazard of Loving the Creatures*, and \*\*\* *A Cradle Hymn*. Others to be pondered are: \*\* *God's Dominion and Decrees*; \*\* *True Riches*; \*\*\* *Crucifixion to the World by the Cross of Christ*; \*\* *A Prospect of Heaven makes Death easy*; \*\* *Man Frail, and God Eternal*.

In another generation, not so long ago, young people read his *Divine Songs, for the Use of Children* (1720), the echoes of which linger in our minds, the source forgotten. Does not the reader recall in \*\*\* *Against Quarrelling and Fighting*—"Let dogs delight to bark and bite," or in \*\*\* *Against Idleness and Mischief*—"How doth the little busy Bee," or even \*\* *The Sluggard*? The last two we know also in Lewis Carroll's immortal parodies in *Alice in Wonderland*.

*The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, edited by D. N. Smith, 1926, contains some of the more important poems of Isaac Watts.



## JOHN PHILIPS (1676-1709)

Some poets are born to oblivion, some achieve oblivion, and some have oblivion thrust upon them. John Philips is of the latter class, for anthologists seem to have entered into a conspiracy of silence concerning his work. The modern reader, however, is still free to seek his meat wherever he can find it, and for this reason he is advised to look up \* *The Splendid Shilling* (1705). In this poem he will be reminded that:

“Happy the man, who void of cares and strife,  
In silken or in leathern purse retains  
A Splendid Shilling. He nor hears with pain  
New oysters cried, nor sighs for cheerful ale.”

This pleasant thought should induce the reading of the whole poem. Should the reader want authority for the suggestion, he may be informed that Mr. Addison liked this poem. And no less a person than Dr. Johnson held there was much truth in the poem *Cyder* (1708), an opinion the reader may be left to confirm at his leisure.

## DAVID MALLET (1705-1765)

Mallet is now included in summaries of the early symptoms of the romantic movement because of two poems *William and Margaret* (1724), an imitation of the old ballads and *The Birks of Endennay*.

It may be, though, that a reader will find a smile in “Margaret’s grimly ghost” whose “lily hand” was “clay cold.” After the experience through which Margaret, as an “injured” ghost, puts him, the reader is not surprised to learn that William “word spake never more.” Both poems are short and ten minutes will suffice for Mallet. The poems are in *English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement* by G. B. Woods, 1916, and *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, 1926.

## RICHARD SAVAGE (d. 1743)

Savage survives mainly because Dr. Johnson's life of him, in *Lives of the Poets*, is a biography that is a literary masterpiece in its kind. The man who could so inspire the friendship and admiration of Johnson demands from the reader at least a passing glance at some of his poetry. Unfortunately, the poetry of Savage can be recommended on no other ground; to-day it seems false and commonplace. The reader will find in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse* two specimens of Savage, one a selection from his long poem *The Bastard* (1728), the other *To a Young Lady* (1733). Having read these, the reader may pass on with a clear conscience to Dr. Johnson's \*\* *Life of Savage*, where he will find matter more to his taste.

For a further selection of the minor verse writers of the eighteenth century, see that excellent anthology *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*, 1926, and *Forgotten Lyrics of the Eighteenth Century*: O. Doughty, 1924.

## GILBERT BURNET (1643-1715)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. ix, Chap. vii.

Burnet's *The History of My Own Time* is accessible in an abridged edition in Everyman's Library. It is an account in the form of memoirs reaching from 1660 down to 1713, the record of a broad-minded man who has much to say about the true principles of politics, as distinguished from questions of party. Among the great volume of historical and ecclesiastical writings turned out by Burnet, this book, at least, commends itself to the general reader, who likes, when possible, to get his history from contemporary documents.

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## Memoir Writers (1715-1760)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. IX.

## LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU (1689-1762)

Lady Mary's husband was English ambassador at Constantinople from 1716-1718 whence, having accompanied him, she began her letters on which her literary reputation principally rests, although she was also the author of amusing light verses. Her letters were later continued from Avignon and from Italy. She is also famous for having introduced into England inoculation against the small-pox, in her time an exceedingly common disease. For the curious in gossip there are also the admiration of Pope for her and his subsequent satirizing of her to consider.

Her letters are delightful reading. In Constantinople she adopted Turkish dress and learned the language in order to study the Turk at close range. She was an independent-minded woman of brains, and with some of the eccentricities sometimes associated with intelligent women. Her letters are vividly descriptive and she reveals in them shrewd and keen powers of observation.

The complete edition of her *Letters and Works* is that edited by her great-grandson Lord Wharncliffe, 2 vols., new ed., 1893. The Everyman's Library prints also a volume of her \*\*\* *Letters*. Select passages from her letters have been edited by A. R. Ropes, 1892. Two of her poems, *The Lover: A Ballad* and *In Answer to a Lady who advised Retirement*, are in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*. A book, containing the substance of additional letters, is \* *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Her Times* by "George Paston," 1907.

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Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. X.

From the close of the seventeenth century on into the eighteenth there was written a vast body of scurrilous burlesque literature for the particular edification of the public of the coffee-



houses. Unfortunately, very little of it has been reprinted, since college professors, who mostly have such matters in their control, are a race fearful for the dignity of literature. The reader who is curious about this often amusing scurrility will have to creep about for himself among the bookstacks of great libraries in order to satisfy his curiosity.

To guide him in part he may be told that such stuff is mainly of two kinds: one, racy pictures of London and all the questionable amusements, the other, various kinds of burlesques inspired by the Frenchman Scarron's travesty of Virgil's *Aeneid*. A great deal of this humour in its English dress is, of course, political, and therefore too technical for the general reader, but there is enough of the other sort. The French scholar J. J. Jusserand has made some of this material available in a modern edition of *The Comical Romance, & Other Tales by Scarron: Done into English by Tom Brown of Snifnal, John Savage, and Others, 1892*.

### GEORGE BERKELEY (1685-1753)

Camb. Hist. of Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. XI.

The name of Bishop Berkeley stands high in the history of English philosophy and in the progress of education, particularly as concerns the latter, in America. Further, he is a master of English prose style. In 1710 he published his first important philosophical work *Principles of Human Knowledge*, Part I, and in the preceding year his *Essay toward a New Theory of Vision*.

Bishop Berkeley held, to put it briefly, that the universe is purely spiritual; that to postulate the existence of matter is an unnecessary assumption. "The ideas *are* the things." His theory is derived from Plato. Among English philosophers he ranks with Locke and Hume for the importance of his influence.

The reader will find Berkeley thought-stirring. He compels

us to overhaul all the lumber in our mental attics, and leaves us convinced that much of it is rubbish, at the same time that he gives us a few museum specimens of mental furniture for our best parlour. Of course, the cautious reader will check his new stock by comparing it to-day with what is on display in the show-windows of Science. Fashions in mental furniture are very changeable, but a few eighteenth century examples are nevertheless desired by all collectors.

The clearest statements of Berkeley's theories are in his Platonic \*\*\* *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*. Hylas believes in matter and Philonous is the lover of mind who sets forth Berkeley's own doctrine. So clearly are these dialogues written that a reader who knows nothing of philosophy and its technical language will have no difficulty in following the argument and understanding the conclusions.

A word or two concerning Berkeley's connection with America should be said. He had a project for founding a university in the Bermudas, and arrived at Newport, Rhode Island, in 1729 where he waited patiently for three years for the English government to carry out the promise of the Bermuda foundation. During this time he was a great inspiration to the cause of education in America, and had much influence upon the mind of Jonathan Edwards. In Berkeley's *Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America* occurs the famous line: "Westward the course of empire takes its way."

\*\* *A New Theory of Vision* and \*\* *Principles of Human Knowledge* are in one volume in Everyman's Library. Extracts from the \*\*\* *Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* are included in R. M. Alden's *Readings in English Prose of the Eighteenth Century*, 1911. *Verses on the Prospect* are in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*.

*The Life and Letters of Berkeley* by A. C. Fraser, 1871, is the standard biography.



The complete *Dialogues* are in Bohn's Library.

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### BERNARD MANDEVILLE (1670?-1733)

Mandeville, like Shaftesbury, has bequeathed us one book for after-dinner browsing, *The Fable of the Bees*. His philosophical position is, however, on the opposite side of the fence from Shaftesbury's cultured rationalistic optimism. He is a great believer in the effect of flattery on human nature, with curious references to an unspecified group denominated "they," who, he believed, set out once upon a time to civilize mankind by the use of flattery. "Thus sagacious moralists draw men like angels, in hopes that the pride at least of some will put them upon copying after the beautiful originals which they are represented to be."

Brief selections from *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*, are in R. M. Alden's *Readings in English Prose of the Eighteenth Century*, 1911. Robert Browning has something to say about Mandeville's theories in *Parleyings with Certain People*, p. 952 of the Cambridge edition of Browning's *Poems*. See also F. D. Maurice's edition of William Law's *Remarks on the Fable of the Bees*, 1844.

*The Fable of the Bees*: Ed. by F. B. Kaye, 2 vols., 1897.

### ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER, THIRD EARL OF SHAFTESBURY (1671-1713)

For pleasant reading now and then Shaftesbury's \* *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions and Times* (1711) may be safely recommended. Shaftesbury's opinions are those of a gentleman, in a rather restricted sense perhaps (Lamb complained that his style was too "genteel"), nevertheless they are



the opinions of a cultivated man who has less than the usual share of illusions and a good portion of common sense. "A good poet and an honest historian" he says, without telling us where to find the latter, "may afford learning enough for a gentleman." The *Characteristics* have been reprinted in an edition by J. M. Robertson, 1900.

### WILLIAM LAW (1686-1761)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. IX, chap. XII.

The eighteenth century is known as the Age of Reason because of the faith men then had in the logical processes of the human mind. Religion was for them a matter concerned with the necessity of satisfying man's reason, and the Bible was examined for the purpose of considering its credibility. The extreme rationalistic position in religion was to postulate God as an eternal cause, and to deny the necessity for any other particular interpretation of religion such as was offered by Christianity. These men called themselves deists, and to the deist one historic religion was of equal importance with any other.

William Law was a mystic and therefore an exception to the spirit of the rationalistic age. Before writing his great work *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729) he had already replied to Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* and pointed out weaknesses in the position of the deists.

*A Serious Call* is one of the few books of the generic class "theology" that has appeal for the general reader. It is simple and profound, sincere and eloquent; it enumerates the ideals of the Christian life with deep conviction and with a total absence of what one might describe, without offence, as "professional preaching." This book is in Everyman's Library.

Selections from the works of another mystic, Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), are in Everyman's Library, under the title *The Signature of All Things*.

## The Novel in the Eighteenth Century

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. XIII.

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## SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689-1761)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. X, chap. I.

With Richardson the English novel suddenly sprang into being. This phenomenon, isolated as it was, in a way, had had a long preparation and was therefore not entirely miraculous. Defoe had already shown how truth could be made to serve fiction; Addison had been making careful studies of human nature. In addition to these (and other) literary preparations, the growth of an educated middle-class caused by the development of commerce had greatly increased the size of the reading public. And this new public was a moral, earnest, and sentimental one, taking itself and life very seriously.

Richardson, it so happened, was the actual embodiment in his own person of the attitude toward life of this new public and was moreover, a typical specimen of the middle-classes. He differed from them only in having a remarkable imagination which enabled him to give eternal truth to his characters in spite of his purpose in writing, which was to convey moral edification.

He was past fifty years old when his first novel \*\* *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* <sup>1</sup> appeared in 1740. It was written in the form of letters exchanged among the characters, a method of writing that has, it is true, some things in its favour, such as variety of point of view and opportunity for revealing the separate emotions of the characters, but has also defects, such as repetition, redundancy, and slow progress of the story.

*Pamela* met with such a great success that it was followed the next year with two more volumes describing the heroine's life after marriage. Suffice it to mention that the first two volumes

<sup>1</sup> See Fielding's burlesque, *Joseph Andrews*.



will adequately reward the general reader's virtue. But it would not be true to say that *Pamela*, as a novel, is extinct. The story has emotional power that comes from Richardson's sincerity, a power that grasps even the modern reader unsympathetic toward the sentimentalizing of the moral purpose of the book. Story and characters are vividly presented and the realism of the details contribute so much truth that the reader finds himself moved in spite of all modern instincts warning him to the contrary. Richardson, in short, is an accurate analyzer of motive and character, which is as much as to say that he is a good psychologist. For this reason, his novel has not vanished from our book-shelves.

\*\*\* *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady* (1747-8) was designed to show "the Distresses that may attend the Misconduct both of Parents and Children in relation to Marriage." The novel, as this quotation from the title-page implies, is a pathetic story. Clarissa, lured from home by the villain and rake Love-ace, refuses to marry her seducer, and after much misery dies. Clarissa's virtue is upheld throughout by her conviction that her reward will be in Heaven. Again Richardson adheres to the letter-form for unfolding his story.

The success of *Clarissa* was even greater than that of *Pamela*, and rightly so, for it is, after all that may be said of its faults and tiresome length, a great novel. During the writing of the final portion, Richardson was inundated with letters from readers imploring him to save Clarissa's life, but to his credit, he went relentlessly on to the logical end of his story. Again, the greatness of *Clarissa* lies in the emotional fervour of the story and in the portrayal of the character of Clarissa herself.

*The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1754) has not stood the test of time. The character of Sir Charles intended to be that of the perfect gentleman, seems to-day that of an intolerable prig. Richardson had really ventured into a social realm beyond his ken in attempting to portray an aristocratic gentleman. The novel



has not the emotional depth of his other two, and as Richardson had no sense of humour, the story lacks the aid needed to sustain its almost unparalleled length. In its own day, nevertheless, it was almost as successful as the other two.

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## HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. II.

While it is not likely that every reader will have the patience to find out for himself the merits of Richardson as a novelist, one may feel certain that any reader will enjoy the novels of Henry Fielding. In fact, if one never read any other novelists than Fielding, Jane Austen, and George Meredith, one would have absorbed a large part of all that is best in the English novel. But probably it is too dangerous to make such sweeping remarks as this, for all of our important novelists have their own horde of enthusiastic followers ready to give verbal battle in their defence. The statement will be modified as follows: there is no more important and more pleasure-giving a novelist in English literature than Fielding.

The curious fact is that if Richardson had not written *Pamela*, Fielding might not have become a novelist. He had been a writer of comedies, farces, and burlesques until the licensing act in 1737 put an end to his dramatic career by limiting the theatres to two, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. He had next, in 1739, founded a newspaper, *The Champion*, studied law and been admitted to the bar in 1740. This desultory literary activity had not produced any work of outstanding merit, except possible his burlesque tragedy *Tom Thumb*. Then, as has been said, *Pamela*

appeared and Fielding was inspired to write a parody of it. The result was \*\*\* *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams* (1742)

Fielding attacked the sentimental morality and piety of Richardson, by the method of an opposite parallel plot, coupled with a most destructive wit. It was a contest of intellectuality versus Richardson's earnest emotionalism. Fielding made Joseph Andrews the brother of Pamela, and like his sister, caused him successfully to resist all temptations. As Fielding warmed to his work, however, the parody ceased. The introduction of Parson Adams, who has since become the model for many portrayals of unworldly, lovable parsons, changed the character of the story. Parson Adams dominated the scene and the novel became a tale of the open road—the incidents, chance meetings and encounters by the wayside. Fielding announced the story as "written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes," the author of *Don Quixote*. There is, however, only a vague resemblance between the unworldliness of Parson Adams and the idealism of Don Quixote.

*Joseph Andrews* is a novel of contemporary life among ordinary, common people. It discards Richardson's purpose of writing for the moral edification of the reader and substitutes for it the intention of being amusing. His wit and humour sometimes lead Fielding into caricature in the character drawing, for he had not as yet shaken off the over-emphasis of the comic aspects of character which he had learned from writing farces, nor had he arrived in this novel at a closely constructed plot. The idea with which he began, the parodying of *Pamela*, caused him to be an opportunist in regard to the incidents, and the result is far from that perfection of structure which he later attained in *Tom Jones*. On the other hand, *Joseph Andrews* is one of the most amusing stories ever written.

Mention has already been made of the influence of his experience as a writer of comedies and farces upon his method of



character portrayal. The influence is found in all of his novels which are indeed comedies of manners writ large. He resembles Meredith, different as these two men are, in regarding the novel as a mirror of social foibles. In Fielding, however, the comedy is not limited to the representation of a cross-section of a single stratum of society, but his pictures are vertical slices from top to bottom of society, in town and country, and include all sorts and conditions of men and women.

His wit and his satire are directed chiefly against cruelty, unkindness, hypocrisy, especially the hypocrisy that consciously or unconsciously substitutes the letter of lip service for the spirit of truth. His morality, which has seemed to some worthy souls no morality, has for its standard goodness of heart. Weaknesses that lead into temptation and to yielding to it he regards as inevitable in human nature and of no final importance providing the heart is good. He hates only the mean in spirit.

In 1749 \*\*\* *Tom Jones* appeared and the English novel stood complete. Because Fielding announced it as a comic epic, and does in fact, burlesque the epic in his treatment, some have called the structure of this novel "loose" and "rambling." It is not possible to agree with any such designation of its plot. The secret of Tom's birth is preserved until the end, and Tom's character amid all his adventures insures a unity throughout an amazing variety. There is, in fact, entire structural unity with the sole exception of the introduction of the narrative of the Old Man of the Hill.

One of the tests of a novelist is not whether the reader remembers the plot but whether he remembers the characters. Have there entered into his memory a group of people, the acquaintance with whom has enriched his life? This test, of course, Fielding passes triumphantly. Human nature, he tells us, is his bill of fare, and human nature in all its aspects he has given us: the likable Tom himself; Squire Western, the Jacobite, hard riding, hard



drinking, hard swearing country sportsman; Sophia Western who has still enough character of her own to overcome the perils of idealization at her author's hands; Black George, the scoundrel; and the immortal Partridge, whose scraps of Latin and impression of Mr. David Garrick in the character of Hamlet, will remain in one's mind forever. Surely here is evidence of the extraordinary effect of *Tom Jones*.

In addition to the characters he meets and knows ever after, the reader carries away a panorama of mid-eighteenth century life. Fielding unfolds a great moving picture of the times, scene after scene passing across the pages of the book. No other novel represents life more completely.

\*\* *Jonathan Wild* (1743), the story of a criminal<sup>1</sup> is an ironic treatment of the subject of greatness. Wild is a "great man" in his world, and thinking on this fact, says Fielding, will lead us to avoid confusing greatness with goodness. The method of his irony is to treat the qualities of Wild's greatness as if they were the qualities of goodness.

\* *Amelia* (1751) has for its principal interest the character of the heroine, a pattern of a wife married to the weak Captain Booth. The story has pathos, a new element in Fielding's work.

His health now failed him and Fielding set out on a voyage to Portugal in a vain hope of getting well. He died at Lisbon, but before his death wrote \*\* *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, a work hardly inferior to his novels.

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*Henry Fielding, a Memoir*: G. M. Godden. 1910.

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*Joseph Andrews*, and *Tom Jones*. Everyman's Library.

*Voyage to Lisbon*. World's Classics series. 1907.

Two lyrics from Fielding's plays \*\* *Hunting Song* and \*\* *The Roast Beef of Old England* are in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*.

<sup>1</sup> See Thackeray's *Barry Lyndon*.

*Lectures on the English Comic Writers:* W. Hazlitt. See "On the English Novelists."  
*The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century:* W. M. Thackeray. 1853.  
*Eighteenth Century Vignettes:* A. Dobson. See Fielding.  
*Hours in a Library:* Sir Leslie Stephen.

## TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT (1721-1771)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. II.

Smollett was a Scot who had served in the navy as a surgeon, made a prosperous marriage to a Jamaican lady, and then endeavoured unsuccessfully to practise his medical profession in London. After a few preliminary experiments in literature in the form of some satirical poems he wrote his first novel,\*\* *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), modelled, as he said, on the plan of Le Sage's *Gil Blas*. This is a story of the type technically called "picaresque," which means a realistic novel of travel and adventure with rogues for nerves. The most interesting portions of this story are the naval scenes and characters, written from Smollett's own experience.

Roderick Random, the hero, strikes the modern reader as something of a scoundrel, but the tale is boisterous and vivid. On the other hand, the sensitive reader must be warned against Smollett's coarseness, which is much worse than Fielding's, the difference being that Smollett seems to enjoy narrating unpleasant facts, while Fielding generally uses them (not always for a good motive, to be sure) because they are a necessary part of the picture he is painting. Another difference between these writers is that Fielding's exaggeration of certain comic types does not go beyond a caricature founded on truth, whereas Smollett's comedy is that of a grim and callous farce.

\*\*\* *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) is another narrative of incident containing the best portraits of character of any of his work. Inserted into the story are the scandalous *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*. The reader can see clearly in



*Peregrine Pickle* the influence that Smollett exercised on Charles Dickens in the next century.

\* *The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1752) is the story of a rogue and scoundrel who lives by his wits. The first half is much better than the last, when unexpectedly the story becomes tedious and incredible. Count Fathom's repentance and reform are too much for the reader to swallow.

\* *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771) is the story in epistolary form of the not very exciting adventures of a Welsh family travelling through England and Scotland. The reformed Count Fathom again appears as a character in this novel. The novel has Smollett's chief merits, vigour and vivid characterization, besides being a valuable picture of men and manners, the letter-form enabling the author to present, with comment, contrasting viewpoints.

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*Roderick Randon*. Everyman's Library.

*Humphrey Clinker*. World's Classics series.

*The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century*: W. M. Thackeray. 1853.

*Letters*: Ed., by E. S. Noyes.

\* *The Tears of Scotland* is in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*. Written after the failure of the uprising in 1745.

*Smollet as Poet*: H. S. Buck. 1927.

For Smollett's *History of England*, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. x, chap. xii.

#### LAURENCE STERNE (1713-1768)

*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. x, chap. iii.

The four giants of the novel in the eighteenth century are Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne. The others, even the readable ones, are lesser fry. These four may be grouped together because each is a genius in his own way, and of these four the two most individual geniuses are Fielding and Sterne.

Fielding is an accurate mirror of life, Sterne a reflector of



moods and opinions. Thus Sterne brought another element into the novel, the record of the opinions of himself and of his fictitious characters, as distinct from the picture of their actions. He is not interested in adventure but in feeling. Hence arises the adjective "sentimental," which, as used by Sterne, has not the same meaning that we attach to it to-day.

The sentimental mood of Sterne is an emotionally followed train of ideas, often gently pathetic, but not losing the note of wit or humour for all the quiet melancholy, the whole amounting to a personal commentary upon life, and suggested, perhaps, by a fact insignificant in proportion to the use made of it. No better example of the method can be found than in a passage in \*\*\* *A Sentimental Journey* in the pause at Lyons where Sterne apostrophizes the heavily loaded ass patiently awaiting the return of his master.

\*\*\* *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, written and published at intervals from 1759-67, is unique. Many have disliked the book, Horace Walpole among others, and no one, probably, would want to read it through without turning for relief at intervals to other books less full of genius. But to read *Tristram Shandy*, once one has acquired the habit, is the recreation of an entire lifetime. Probably few other novels can be so steadily re-read, because it does not matter at all where the reader opens *Shandy*. He can begin anywhere and be certain of finding pleasure. The persons who dislike the book are of two kinds: serious and literal-minded people who are irritated by what they consider to be Sterne's trifling, and those who are shocked by his admittedly scandalous wit and humour. Nearly all adults with civilized minds, however, may be trusted to like it.

Nor must it be forgotten that through its pages march another group of immortal characters, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Walter Shandy who take their places at once in one's select circle

of well-remembered shadows, more real than the people one calls acquaintances.

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*Lectures on the English Humourists:* W. M. Thackeray. 1853.

## JAMES THOMSON (1700–1748)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. ix, chap. iv.

Thomson's studies of nature in \*\* *The Seasons* have not only the charm of their quaintness—for to the modern reader the distinctive eighteenth-century flavour of Thomson's language does seem quaint—but they have the pleasure of recognition for all who love the countryside. It is a safe statement to make that if a reader likes Wordsworth's pastoral poetry, he will like Thomson's *The Seasons*.

It is the poetry of minute and accurate observation, together with what Wordsworth has described as "the spirit of genuine imagination." In his love of nature Thomson is another of the numerous forerunners of the romantic movement, but the artificiality of his style is still that of the eighteenth century. He broke away, however, from the rhymed couplet, returning to blank verse, under Miltonian influence, in *The Seasons*. His voice is his own, something other than a distant echo of Milton's.

\*\* *The Seasons* was written over a considerable period of time, *Winter* published in 1725 and *Autumn*, the last, not until 1730. Fairly long selections from *Winter*, *Summer* and *Autumn*, and also from *The Castle of Indolence*, are in G. B. Woods: *English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement*, 1916. The extracts in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse* are hardly long enough to give an adequate idea of the poem. More extensive



selections are in E. Bernbaum : *English Poets of the Eighteenth Century*, 1918.

Thomson's second poem, one not so often read as *The Seasons*, is \**The Castle of Indolence* (1748), in Spenserian stanzas. The reader will find the poem "a pleasing land of drowsy hed" as "of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye." It is excellent reading when one is in a quiet mood. Thomson was also the author of the song *Rule, Britannia*.

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*The Seasons and Castle of Indolence*: Ed., by J. L. Robertson. 1891.

The complete poetical *Works* are in Oxford Standard Authors series.

See also William Collins: *Ode on the Death of Thomson*. In *Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*.

#### THOMAS GRAY (1716-1771)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. vi.

Thomas Gray and Oliver Goldsmith are the two poets of the eighteenth century whose popularity has lasted as long as their fame. Even readers who know very little poetry are familiar with Gray's \*\*\* *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, and with some of the poetry of Goldsmith. The popularity of the *Elegy* is in part a tribute to a great poem, but more likely one to its simplicity, suggestive thought, word-music, and clearness. Here, if the general reader will pardon the statement, is an ideal poem for the general reader, and since it is also a good poem, all alike are satisfied with it. A comparison should be made between the *Elegy* and Robert Blair's *The Grave*.

Coaxed by his liking for the *Elegy*, the general reader may venture further with Gray, say to \* *The Progress of Poesy*; \*\* *The Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*; \* *Hymn to Adversity*; and \*\* *On the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes*.

Some may care for the two Norse odes, *The Fatal Sisters* and



*The Descent of Odin, or The Bard*, but they shall not be mentioned in these pages.

*Lives of the Poets*: Samuel Johnson.

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## EDWARD YOUNG (1683-1756)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. vii.

Edward Young belongs to a group of poets of the eighteenth century whose names are familiar but whose verse the modern reader usually knows only to a slight degree. And in truth, there is risk in plunging rashly into Young's poetry, for one might have bad luck at the outset and become bored before one had found any pleasure in it.

Probably Young's long poem *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality* (1742-5), usually called simply *Night Thoughts* was as widely read and pondered for over one hundred years as any other poem in our language. In the sixties of the last century, engravings and lithographs were still appearing ornamented with tombs, a moonrise through black clouds, and an appropriate quotation from *Night Thoughts*.

The following is intended as a cautious guide to light a reader through some of the cavernous chambers of Young's rhetoric.

\* *Night Thoughts*: Night I, (On night) ll. 1-34; (on man) ll. 67-89; (on procrastination) ll. 292-321; Night II, (on time) ll. 106-143; Night III, (on satiety) ll. 325-342; (on death) ll. 487-536; Night IV, (God just and merciful) ll. 201-233; Night V, (night man's friend) ll. 125-137; Night VI, (divinity in man's mind) ll. 428-441; (symbolism of Nature) ll. 692-710; Night VII, (proof of man's immortality) ll. 253-323; Night IX, (the poet's consolation) ll. 1-16.

Young's representation in modern anthologies is inadequate. His collected poems are in the Aldine Poets series, 2 vols., 2nd ed.

See also George Eliot's essay on Young: *Worldliness and Other-worldliness*.

### WILLIAM COLLINS (1721-1759)

The fame of William Collins rests upon his Odes which contain passages, at least, of as great poetry as one could wish. Swinburne held Collins to be superior to Gray; Matthew Arnold reversed the ranking. The reader may form his own opinion, but neglect Collins he must not.

Suggestions: \* *A Song from Shakespeare's Cymbeline* (See *Cymbeline*, act iv, sc. ii); \*\*\* *Ode to Simplicity*; \*\*\* *Ode Written in the beginning of the Year 1746*; \*\* *Ode to Evening*; \*\*\* *The Passions, An Ode for Music*; \* *Ode on the Death of Thomson*; *An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland* ("H—" with which the ode begins stands for John Home (1722-1808), the author of the tragedy "Douglas.")

*Lives of the Poets*: S. Johnson.

*Poetical Works of Gray and Collins*: Ed., by A. L. Poole and C. Stone. Oxford Standard Authors series.

An adequate number of the odes are in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*.

### ROBERT BLAIR (1699-1746)

Blair is a poet of a single work \* *The Grave* (1743), more lugubrious even than the mournful soliloquy of Young's *Night Thoughts*. And yet, the modern reader might do worse than to try the effect of this poem. Prophecy is too dangerous in this instance. Long enough selections from *The Grave* will be found in G. B. Woods: *English Poetry and Prose of the Romantic Movement*, 1916; a lesser dose in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*. See also William Blake, p. 223.

### WILLIAM SHENSTONE (1714-1763)

\* *The Schoolmistress*, "an imitation of Spenser," is Shenstone's not altogether hopeless claim to fame. As a matter of fact the poem is agreeably pleasant reading. He is likewise the author of the famous lines written in an inn at Henley (The Red Lion):



“Who'er has travell'd life's dull round,  
Where'er his stages may have been,  
May sigh to think he still has found  
The warmest welcome at an inn.”

For selections from Shenstone the references under Blair, above, will serve.

*The School-Mistress.* Type-facsimile reprint, Oxford University Press series.  
A selection of his essays entitled *Men and Manners* has been made by H. Ellis, 1927.

### SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. viii.

Dr. Samuel Johnson is a legendary hero of literature, but unlike most heroes of legends, the myths about him are mostly facts, if such a paradoxical statement may be permitted. Mr. Boswell in his *Life of Johnson* is partly the creator of the legend, but only in part, for many other contemporaries have left their testimony to the existence of this giant. Macaulay has exaggerated the giant into a serio-comic monster, but that is a habit with all romancers who write after the event.

It is customary to say of Johnson that he was a greater man than he appears in his writings, and many readers, accepting this dictum, turn to Boswell and Macaulay, while leaving untouched on the shelves their copies of Johnson. It is humbly suggested that readers try the experiment of beginning with some of Dr. Johnson's literary remains and from them work through to Boswell. Already, in the bibliographies to these pages, attention has been called to Johnson's \*\* *Lives of the Poets*, a work written in old age, full of wisdom, gossip, and critical judgments of a long life lived among poets and their books. As examples of criticism his brief biographies are not infallible, but they are never dull, and have the further value that the writer has been listening to poetry with an eighteenth century ear, tempered (if that is the proper word) with native good taste and commonsense.



To go backward chronologically, there are some poems, \* *London* (1738), in imitation of the third satire of Juvenal, which is usually represented in anthologies only by the passage on poverty; \*\*\* *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), again imitated from Juvenal, which it will do the reader no harm to read entire; and a \*\* *Prologue for David Garrick*, written for the opening of the Drury Lane theatre in 1747, in which Dr. Johnson pays one of the first of his tributes to Shakespeare.

Of the essays that appeared in *The Rambler* it is the fashion to say that they are heavier in style than those of Addison and Steele, and thus they are waved aside. \*\* *The Advantages of Living in a Garret*, \*\*\* *On Sorrow*, and from *The Idler*, *On the Multiplication of Books* (No. 85, Dec. 1, 1759), may pleasantly surprise the reader.

There are three other brief examples of Johnson's prose which are better known than the essays contributed by him to periodicals. These are: \*\*\* *A Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield* (1755), rejecting the latter's belated offer to sponsor Johnson's *Dictionary*; \*\* *The Preface to the Dictionary*; and \*\*\* *The Preface* to his edition of Shakespeare's plays. The last in this list is an example of Johnson's critical judgment at its best.

Two other works of Johnson should be examined before the reader is ready for Boswell: \*\* *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759), a short novel on the theme of *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, and \* *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), written as the result of a tour he made with Boswell in 1773.

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*Letters*: Ed., by G. B. Hill. 2 vols. 1892.  
*Essays*: Selected and edited. G. B. Hill.  
*Johnson on Shakespeare*: Sir Walter Raleigh. 5th ed., 1925.  
*Vanity of Human Wishes*: Ed., E. J. Payne.

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*Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*: Ed., R. W. Chapman. 1924. Includes Boswell's Journal.

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See also Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*—The Hero as Man of Letters. 1840.

*On Johnson's Life of Milton*: T. De Quincey.

*Eighteenth Century Vignettes*: A. Dobson. Johnson's Library, 2nd series, 1894.

*Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson*: T. B. Macaulay. 1831.

### JAMES BOSWELL (1740-1795)

Boswell has earned his immortality by his \*\*\* *Life of Johnson* (1791), a work that is unquestionably the greatest biography in the English language. He had other things upon his mind in his own day, and did some other things besides writing this biography, but there is no point in mentioning anything else since the world long ago became convinced that his *Life of Johnson* alone stands for the work of James Boswell.

His acquaintance with Johnson began late (in 1763) but continued from then until the death of his hero. During these years he kept in his journal an exact record of everything that Johnson did and said. The exactness of Boswell's record is not alone sufficient to explain the greatness of his achievement as a biographer. Accused on every side of being a toady and a flatterer, who forced himself upon people, the fact remains that this person produced a work of genius. There is probably no better explanation of his *Life of Johnson* than this—it is a work of genius.

The standard edition is that of G. B. Hill, 6 vols., 1887. Another edition in 2 vols., Everyman's Library. One volume abridged edition, ed. by H. V. Abbott, 1923; 1 vol., Globe ed., 1892. Three vol. edition by A. Dobson, 1901. Illustrated edition, ed. by R. Ingpen, 1907.

See also Bibliography under Johnson, S.



## OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. ix.

The kindly humour and sentimental pathos of Dr. Goldsmith have preserved a little of the eighteenth century air for us to sniff in this more heated age. We still read Goldsmith a little, and we make our children in school and college read a little more of him. We even remember that he played the flute, and the practice of this art seems to us convincing evidence that the doctor was a genial, unworldly man, probably worthy of our tolerant smiles but a person not to be taken too seriously. No really important man ever played the flute, we imply to ourselves, but some may be forgiven for doing so if they were poets and knew no more of the world than must follow from being cursed by the Muse at birth.

In truth, Goldsmith is not a great genius but his writings are full of pleasure and delight for everybody. It is difficult to imagine a person not "liking Goldsmith." He offers us variety—essays (not so eagerly sought after now), comedies, poems, a novel, something for all tastes, and each work in its kind most happily done. It is his kindliness that we like best of all.

The reader needs no suggestions but only to be reminded to fill in a gap or two from the works of Goldsmith. Poems: \*\*\* *The Deserted Village* (1770); \*\* *The Traveller, or, a Prospect of Society* (1764); shorter pieces: \*\* *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog* and *Song* (in *The Vicar of Wakefield*); passage on David Garrick in *Retaliation* (1774); \* *The Haunch of Venison*; *The Hermit*.

Essays: *Night in the City*; *The Man in Black*; *A Reverie at the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap*; *Adventures of a Strolling Player*; *National Prejudices*; *Sentimental Comedy*; *Remarks on our Theatres*; *On Dress*; *Happiness in a Great Measure Dependent on Constitution*; *On our Theatres*; *On Education*; read also selections from *The Citizen of the World*.

Comedies: \*\*\* *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773); \* *The Good Natur'd Man* (1768).

Novel: \*\*\* *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766).



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*Essay on Goldsmith*: Leigh Hunt. 1806.

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*Oliver Goldsmith*: T. B. Macaulay. 1856. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. x.

*Eighteenth Century Vignettes*: A. Dobson. 1st series. Essay on "The Citizen of the World."

For Goldsmith's *History of England*, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. x, chap. xii.

## JAMES MACPHERSON (1736-1796)

*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. x, chap. x.

Macpherson professed to be the translator of ancient Gaelic poetry by "Ossian." Into the literary quarrel that resulted over Macpherson's claims to have discovered an ancient poet it is not possible to go. He seems to have founded his work on Gaelic literature. His importance resulted from the popularity of his "translations." They contributed to the revival of interest in old literature, and through this interest, to the beginnings of the romantic movement. His versions are in prose.

Selections from Macpherson are in R. M. Alden's *Readings in English Prose of the Eighteenth Century*, 1911.

An account of the whole episode has been written by J. S. Sharp: *James Macpherson*, 1905.

*The Legacy of the Middle Ages*: C. G. Crump and E. F. Jacob.

## THOMAS CHATTERTON (1752-1770)

The "boy poet" Chatterton forged some remarkable poems which he attributed to "Thomas Rowley," whose period, he said, was the fifteenth century. Chatterton had genius, although his pathetic death at an early age cut him off from the full flowering of his poesy. His poems are difficult going for the

modern reader, because of the archaic words and spelling affected by the boy. The selections in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse* will probably content the average person.

PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, FOURTH EARL  
OF CHESTERFIELD (1694-1773)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. xi.

The *Letters* of Lord Chesterfield to his son and another series to his godson are remembered, not always accurately, as worldly advice to a young man on polite conduct and good manners. The entire collection covers, however, a much wider range of subjects, and while Lord Chesterfield's advice contained in correspondence, is practical, and some of it framed with eighteenth century manners in mind, the total impression is not wholly materialistic.

A young man is judged by his friends and by the company he keeps. Aristocratic lineage is not the only test of good company. The noble lord points out that he considered the company of Mr. Addison and Mr. Pope the equivalent of that of all the princes of Europe.

A young man should be modest in the display of his knowledge; the argument from a historical parallel is dangerous, for circumstances are never exactly alike; it is pedantry to lard conversations with quotations from Latin and Greek authors; on the other hand, it is shameful not to be a master of learning.

A young man should study to please women, for they are a numerous part of company, and their opinions go a long way in establishing a man's character in the fashionable part of the world. Women are, however, only children of a larger growth, and therefore, although they must be humoured and pleased, they are not to be consulted in serious matters.

A young man should adapt his conversation to the company he is with, avoid swearing, and loud laughter. Men must be

treated with tact; princes by the same rules that are applicable to women. A young man should never be ashamed of doing what is right.

These brief summaries of a few of the letters will give the reader some idea of what to expect. Lord Chesterfield's style, it is hardly necessary to add, is one of the models of eighteenth century prose.

*Letters:* Ed. by J. Bradshaw, 3 vols., 1892. Another ed., 1925.

*Life:* W. H. Craig. 1907.

See also Horace Walpole, p. 228.

### SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS (1723-1792)

It is not always true that a great painter is an authority upon the principles of art. The great creative artist, which is as much as to say, a genius, so often works by instinct, or builds better than he knows, that frequently his attempts to explain his art are only a series of strange confusions. The \*\* *Discourses on Art* (Coll. ed., 1797) of Sir Joshua Reynolds are an exception to this rule, possibly because eighteenth century art, even when inspired, was usually conscious of its methods, or more likely, because the abilities of Sir Joshua were a very rare combination of creative and critical faculties. He does not believe that genius is "a power of producing excellencies which are out of the reach of the rules of art." He would, therefore, disagree with the first two sentences of this paragraph. Genius, he holds, is attainable through "the industry of the mind," coupled, of course, with mastery of technique.

*Discourses on Art.* Everyman's Library. Another edition in the World's Classics series.

### GILBERT WHITE (1720-1793)

Before science became too scientific it was possible to write about it with charm and with a personal touch. Gilbert White has done so in *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789),



and so has Charles Darwin in the next century. Then the subject unfortunately passed beyond the grasp of any but the most pertinacious average man.

White's book is a literary classic, and his Timothy, the tortoise, an immortal character. Timothy, it may interest the American reader to know, came from one of the first families of Virginia. The American reader, too, like the English reader, will be captivated by the beauties of the quiet little village of Selborne; and even experts in natural history have read White's book with respect and with the making of annotations.

*Natural History of Selborne.* Everyman's Library. Another edition in the World's Classics series.

### EDWARD GIBBON (1737-1794)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. xiii.

Gibbon's \*\*\* *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is the greatest monument of historical writing in English literature. It is another of those books which the general reader will keep upon his shelves to take down at intervals throughout his life. One can always be reading Gibbon and never make an end. Gibbon has been truly described by one of his editors, J. B. Bury, as the most brilliant example known of "the union of the historian and the man of letters."

His history is "scientific," that is to say, based upon a careful and minute study of his sources, and it is also "artistic," that is to say, readable. It is true that to-day scholarship has unearthed much that Gibbon did not know, and therefore he is not as "scientific" as he once was, but the main outline still stands, and no changes of literary taste have been able to affect his readability.

His style is remarkably clear; thus the reader is able to comprehend in his own mind the vast vista of the narrative. He is, in general, accurate, as evidenced by the verdicts of present-day historians.

Attacks were made upon Gibbon in his own time for the attitude toward Christianity which he displays in his history (see chaps. xv and xvi), and his attitude has troubled more recent critics. On this point the reader must be left to form his own opinion.

*Life*: J. C. Morison. English Men of Letters series.

*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. 6 vols. Everyman's Library. Another edition, 7 vols., in the World's Classics series.

The standard edition is that edited by J. B. Bury, new ed., 7 vols., 1909-13.

\* *The Memoirs of the Life of Edward Gibbon*: Ed. by G. B. Hill, 1900.

The memoirs are as interesting as the history.

## DAVID HUME (1711-1776)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. xiv.

Hume followed Locke in the "attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects," but as a philosopher Hume is ranked higher than his famous predecessor. It is not possible here to discuss Hume's philosophy or to determine his position among philosophers; it is sufficient to say that the general reader will find his \*\*\* *Treatise of Human Nature*, like Locke's *Essay*, stimulating and absorbing reading. No particular knowledge of philosophy, or of other abstruse subjects, is necessary for the understanding of Hume's lucidly expressed thoughts. The best effect of his work is that it is a perpetual challenge to the average man's unconsciously accepted stock of beliefs and ideas.

*Life*: T. H. Huxley. English Men of Letters series. 1879.

*Treatise of Human Nature*. 2 vols. Everyman's Library.

\* *Essays*: Ed. by T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, rev. ed., 1889.

For Hume's *History of Great Britain*, see Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. xii.

## ADAM SMITH (1723-1790)

The popular conception of Adam Smith is that by writing \*\* *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) he founded the "dismal science" economics. His book, it is true, is the first important exposition

of the science of political economy, and incidentally one of the few readable explanations of this subject, but others had preceded him in France and in England in gathering together some of the theory on which his and our modern conceptions rest. Wealth consists of the goods which men use or consume; and the source of all wealth is labour. This in brief is the theory on which his book is built. Throughout his treatment of his subject he does not lose sight of human nature and human motives, and for these reasons his work is not only more readable but more valuable than that of some of his fellows who sought to reduce economic laws to mathematical abstractions.

In some, or rather it would be more accurate to say, in many respects his theories have since undergone modification and development. For example, his belief in the "natural liberty" of commerce, that is to say, in non-interference or non-control by governments, has had, and is still having, a battle waged for and against it. Possibly it would be better to call Adam Smith the father of Free Trade, rather than the founder of political economy. Such a designation illustrates the argumentative nature of his theory.

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#### WILLIAM PALEY (1743-1805)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. xv.

The time was not so long ago when young persons were required to read Paley's *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794), and now the various reprints of the classics of English literature know this work no more. The book was written to demonstrate the credibility of the New Testament writings and the truth of the Christian revelation. Paley is a clear and con-



vincing writer who knows how to present his arguments so that they may be readily grasped and understood.

### EDMUND BURKE (1729-1797)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. I.

The world still remembers Edmund Burke as one of its greatest orators and political thinkers. And yet to read even the most eloquent of his orations to-day requires a knowledge of the political history and background of his times which few general readers possess. In America, of course, school-boys are made to analyze his \*\* *A Speech on moving his resolutions for conciliation with the Colonies* (1775), and to Americans in general he is thought of as a friend who saw the justice of the Colonies' complaints. School-boys may be pardoned for a somewhat tempered appreciation of his greatness.

Two of his other great speeches *On the Nabob of Arcot's Private Debts* (1785) and *Against Warren Hastings* (1786) are impassioned pieces of eloquence, but for these the reader needs to be "up" on his history.

The most interesting aspect of Burke's career is found in his attitude toward the French Revolution. Although he had sympathized with the Americans for resisting by force the attempt to impose direct taxation without representation upon them, he felt that the French Revolution was founded upon a theory of philosophy that was contrary to the known facts of human nature and that, if successful, it would set up a worse tyranny than the one it sought to replace. He opposed the revolution therefore in his \*\*\* *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), a document to which Thomas Paine wrote an angry reply.<sup>1</sup> He makes in these reflections a penetrating analysis of the fallacies inherent in the abstract doctrine of "the rights of

<sup>1</sup> *The Rights of Man*, See p. 218.

man." He says: "The pretended rights of these theorists are all extremes; and in proportion as they are metaphysically true, they are morally and politically false." Further on: "By these theorists the right of the people is almost always sophistically confounded with their power. . . . Men have no right to what is not reasonable, and to what is not for their benefit. . . ." Again: "On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings . . . laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests." The reader is counselled to read these reflections entire, and to draw from them some modern parallels on the possible tyranny of too theoretical a democracy.

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*American Speeches and Letters*. Everyman's Library.

*The French Revolution and English Literature*: E. Dowden.

## WILLIAM GODWIN (1756-1836)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. II.

Godwin, the father-in-law of the poet Shelley, was an extremely radical advocate of the doctrines and theories of the French Revolution. It was these theories that infected the mind of Shelley, causing him to believe that his ideas on social justice were more important than the writing of poetry.

There are two works of Godwin that the reader should know in order to understand the influence of the French revolution upon radical thought in England and to comprehend the background of Shelley's social theories. The first is \* *Caleb Williams*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Iron Chest*, by George Coleman, the younger, is a dramatization of this novel.



(1794), a propagandist novel; the second, \**An Enquiry concerning Political Justice, and Its Influence on Grand Virtue and Happiness* (1793; rev. 1796.)

*Caleb Williams*, the alternate title is *Things as They Are*, has a double theme, the oppression possible for a poor man to suffer and the delusion of the ideals of chivalry in the minds of the governing class. The compound theme is set forth in a complicated and melodramatic plot told, in spite of Godwin's artificial diction, with such power that the reader's attention is held even through a steady procession of improbabilities.

*Political Justice* is a picture of Godwin's ideal world when reason has at last succeeded in making human nature perfect. His vision is a world of intellectual anarchy with private property banished and every man actuated by the purest motives because his actions shall be only those dictated by reason. As for personal property, each man shall have what is essential for his work. Godwin himself asks for no more than a study in which to philosophize. Should another come to him, he says, and demand his room, the question of possession would be settled by an argument to determine which man had the greater need for it. Godwin's future world would undoubtedly have to place the first emphasis in its university curricula on the teaching of argument. The belief that human nature can be made perfect if it will master its passions by reason is a theory that taints all philosophy derived from the sentimentalities of Jean Jacques Rousseau. To give Godwin credit, however, he believed in no sudden millenium, but hoped for its coming as the result of a slow process of education.

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- \* *Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft*: W. Godwin. Ed. by W. C. Durant. 1927.  
*The Spirit of the Age*: W. Hazlitt.  
*English Thought in the 18th Century*: Leslie Stephen. 2 vols. Lond. and N. Y., 1894, 1928.  
*Free-Thinking and Plain Speaking*: Leslie Stephen. Lond. and N. Y., 1896.

## MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN (1759-1797)

Mary Wollstonecraft has two claims upon our remembrance: she was the mother of Shelley's second wife and the founder of the woman's rights movement. Much that she advocated in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) has come to pass. She urged what we call to-day "co-education," and that girls should have essentially the same curriculum as boys. Women who were so educated would then be entitled to civil and political rights. The world has since conceded all this to her, not always with enthusiasm, but in her own day her book caused an uproar. Mary Wollstonecraft was exceedingly outspoken and every age cringes noisily before the plain speaker.

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## THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809)

One of the most adventurous figures of the eighteenth century was Thomas Paine, who played a considerable part in two revolutions, the American and French. He was an idealist with a streak of practicality in his nature, for his inventions ranged from a new world governed by reason to the iron cantilever bridge. In the end, because of his personal habits and his so-called atheism, he succeeded in getting out of favour with all shades of political, moral, and social opinion in two hemispheres.

He was an Englishman who emigrated to Philadelphia in 1774 where he edited *The Pennsylvania Magazine*. In 1776 his pamphlet entitled *Common-Sense* had considerable influence in shap-

ing public opinion in America in favour of the war of independence. He returned to England after peace had been concluded. In 1791-2 he wrote \*\* *The Rights of Man*, in two parts, in reply to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Fearing arrest, he fled to France where he served as a member of the Convention. He published his *Age of Reason* in 1794-5. The year 1802 saw him back once more in America after a narrow escape from the guillotine, but he was now out of step with two worlds.

*The Rights of Man* is Rousseauism in a doctrinaire form; *The Age of Reason* is a logical vindication of deism.

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#### WILLIAM COBBETT (1762-1835)

Cobbett was a man of humble origin with confused political ideas which were the result of trying to theorize only from what he could see with his own eyes. He, like Paine, came to America for a time, where he wrote Tory pamphlets. Upon his return to England he became a radical. He wrote one book that is a classic *Rural Rides* (1830), an accurate series of notes and observations upon the English countryside. He had himself been a farmer, among other things, and his politico-economic theories sharpened his vision of actual conditions. The book is neither sentimental nor romantic; it is a record of facts set down by a man who knew and enjoyed the country.

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## JEREMY BENTHAM (1748-1832)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. III.

Bentham's philosophy, now known as Utilitarianism, had a great influence upon thought in the nineteenth century. It is a philosophy typically English in that it sought to compromise by uniting in a practical way the sometimes divergent paths of morality, democracy and common sense. Utility was the word Bentham chose as his measuring rod, and the greatest good of the greatest number as one of the norms for utility to attain.

His own definition in *\* Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) will better convey his meaning: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. . . . In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire; but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while. The principle of Utility recognizes this objection and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity by the hands of reason and law. Systems which attempt to question it, deal in sounds instead of sense, in caprice instead of reason, in darkness instead of light."

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*The English Utilitarians*: Sir L. Stephen. 3 vols., 1900.

## THOMAS ROBERT MALTHUS (1766-1834)

Malthus is the exponent of the theory that population increases in a geometric ratio, whereas food, or the means of sub-



sistence, increases in an arithmetic ratio. There is, therefore, a definite limit beyond which human misery will automatically become the rule, whatever ideal government man may set up, or even if Godwin's theory of the perfectibility of human nature were to turn out a true one. Man, in other words, is subject to a natural law from which there is no escape. It is only vice and misery which prevent the world from becoming overpopulated.

These pessimistic conclusions, although a tonic to purge the nonsense out of some of the followers of Rousseau, had a depressing effect upon the thought of the nineteenth century. Now indeed economics had become a "dismal science." The twentieth century has returned, whether rightly or not, to an optimistic rejection of these conclusions. There have been experiments with flies sealed in a bottle which seem to show that population ultimately strikes an equilibrium between its growth and the means of subsistence. Other experiments in chemistry and agriculture have given hopes of great additions, in the future, to the food-supply, and so on. On the other hand, the warning still stands as a healthful corrective of the view that "everything is for the best."

His important work \*\* *Principles of Population* (1798-1803) is in Everyman's Library, 2 vols.

### WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. IV.

Among the poets of the eighteenth century who were forerunners of the romantic movement, Collins, Gray, and Thomson, Cowper must be included as one of the most important of these, and as the poet who had marked effect upon Wordsworth. Further, Cowper is a poet with much variety of matter for the modern reader.

He did not intend at first to devote his life to the writing of

poetry, but took up the art to ward off his attacks of melancholy. At one time in his life his mental disorder was of a most serious nature, from which he was happily recovered. At another period of his life he was converted to one of the evangelical sects and thereupon wrote some hymns which are familiar to us to-day.

His poetry of the countryside is simple and clear; objects are accurately seen and accurately described. He loved retirement and the pleasures of a quiet life, such as companionship with the "hissing urn" for the making of tea, gardens, and contact with the lives of country folk. The poet of domestic life he has been called. In technique, he preferred Milton to Pope; blank verse to the rhymed couplet.

The reader should begin with selections from the *Olney Hymns* (1779), four of which were by Cowper. These are: \*\*\* *Walking with God*; \* *Lovest thou me?* \*\*\* *Light shining out of Darkness*, which opens with the well-known lines:

"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform."

From *Retirement* (1782), the passage on \* *The Retired Statesman*.

From \*\*\* *The Task* (1785), Book I, ll. 534-591 (on Crazy Kate and the outcasts of the roadside; Book II, ll. 1-47 (on slavery); ll. 395-480 (on the perfect preacher); ll. 629-666 (on Society); Book IV (on the postboy); Book V, ll. 1-126 (morning, the wood-cutter, nature).

Short Poems: \* *The Shrubbery*; \*\* *On the Loss of the Royal George*; \*\*\* *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture*; \*\* *To Mary*; \*\*\* *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*; \*\*\* *The Retired Cat*; \*\*\* *Epitaph on a Hare*; \* *Boadicea, an Ode*; \*\* *Yardley Oak*.

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\*\*\* *Letters*: Ed. W. Hadley. Everyman's Library.

*Hours in a Library*: Sir Leslie Stephen.

*Eighteenth Century Vignettes*: A. Dobson.

## GEORGE CRABBE (1754-1832)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. VII.

Crabbe was a realist, painting grimly the horrors and miserable poverty of the countryside, in verse that returned to the rhymed couplet of Pope. He said:

I paint the cot,  
As Truth will paint it, and as bards will not.

Earlier bards, he says, have sentimentalized about the country in their untrue pastorals.

It is not easy to say whether the general reader will like \*\*\* *The Village* (1783). It depends in large part for its interest on one's curiosity about life. The reader will have to experiment for himself on this poem, but he is advised to be courageous enough to undertake the risk involved. There are surprises in literature when one least expects them.

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## SAMUEL ROGERS (1763-1855)

Rogers was much admired in his own day for his long poem *The Pleasures of Memory* (1792), but the modern reader finds a little of this poem a sufficient dose.

**Other Suggestions** (in *The Oxford Book of Eighteenth Century Verse*).

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. X, chap. VII and vol. XI, chap. VIII.

Isaac Hawkins Browne (1705-1760) from a *Pipe of Tobacco*, the passage in imitation of Pope.

James Branston (1694-1744), from *The Art of Politicks* (1729), the passage "Time's Changes."



- Allan Ramsay (1686-1758). *My Peggy is a young thing*, a song from the first act of his pastoral play *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725).
- Alison Rutherford, Mrs. Cockburn (1712-1794). *The Flowers of the Forest*. See also a later version of this song by Jean Elliot (1727-1805). Both are founded on an old ballad later printed by Sir Walter Scott in *Border Minstrelsy*.
- William Julius Mickle (1735-1788). *Ballad of Cumnor Hall*, and *There's nae Luck about the House*.
- Robert Ferguson (1750-1774). *Braid Claith*.
- William Somerville (1675-1742). *An Address to his Elbow-chair*, from *The Student* (1750).
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- Mark Akenside (1721-1770). Selections from *The Pleasures of the Imagination*.
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## WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. xi, chap. ix.

Whether genius is akin to madness or madness to genius would make "a very pretty quarrel" were the opponents to choose Blake by way of illustration to the thesis. That his mysticism and some of his prophetic utterances are incomprehensible to the multitude does not necessarily prove him either a madman or a genius. He is a soul that dwelt apart from all of us, and one can no more guess what was in Blake's mind than one can think like Shelley. Such men have meanings of their own, clear to themselves, and visions which few of us can hope to see, except in glimpses through the glasses their poetry makes for us. As for understanding them, that becomes a trivial matter compared with the glory they share with us through what they have created.

In the case of Blake, a new planet swims into our ken; we do not know what it is, or why it is, but we can see the beauty of it, shining above us across a space we shall never span. Only its light can reach us, but that is enough.

What we do receive from Blake is strangely simple and clear, certain beautiful songs. They have the simplicity, however, that suggests behind them an almost infinite complexity, as if Blake had distilled for us a single, subtle essence out of the great store of his mind.

The two books of Blake's poetry which the general reader needs to know are \*\* *Poetical Sketches* (1783) and \*\*\* *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Experience* (1794). The last was originally two separate groups of poems, subsequently published together. The following list of recommendations is intended only as an approach to the reading of Blake.

From *Poetical Sketches*: *To the Evening Star; How Sweet I roam'd; My silks and fine array; Memory, come hither; Mad Song; To the Muses.*

From *Songs of Innocence*: *Piping down the valleys wild; The Echoing Green; The Lamb; Night; The Little Black Boy; Nurse's Song; Holy Thursday; The Divine Image.*

From *Songs of Experience*: *Hear the Voice of the Bard; The Tiger; The Clod and the Pebble; Ah! Sunflower; The Angel; The Sick Rose; The Chimney Sweeper.*

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#### ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. x.

No poet, with the possible exception of Shakespeare, is so much the people's own as Robert Burns, the lowland Scot peasant.



In Scotland, of course, he is worshipped the other side of idolatry, but a little less blindly in England and throughout the Empire, and in America he is the only poet to achieve the distinction of being called by his Christian name. We do not speak of "Eddie" Poe, but we do say "Bobbie" Burns.

The reason for the universal admiration of all kinds of English-speaking peoples for Burns is not alone to be found in the simplicity of his poetry; there are many other writers of simple poetry that the world has not taken to its heart. Nor is this love for him because his poetry is on familiar themes; literature contains many who write of the life and experiences we all know. The secret perhaps lies in the revelation of his kindly humour and neighbourly friendliness to be found in his verse. We feel the personality of the man behind the poems, and he happens to be a type of man who is liked by everybody. Some of his own charm passes over into what he writes. Further, he is moved or touched by the same ideas, scenes, feelings that appeal to us all, and as he has uttered all this common experience with true poetic inspiration, with a light and always accurate touch (at his best), he gives to all classes of readers satisfaction. The man in the street and the man in the study each is able to say "here is poetry."

Burns has so musical an ear that some of his lyrics cause the reader to compose a tune for them as he repeats them. Not since the Elizabethan madrigal is there any verse that sings itself so naturally. In fact many of his poems were derived from old tunes and folk-songs and the spirit of them entered into him and became the spirit of his verse.

He is also an excellent creator of dramatic character; his people live. He can heap scorn upon hypocrites with the best of the writers of satire. He can touch us with true pathos or make us smile with him because of the tolerance of his humour. He is an aggressive patriot, a lover of freedom, a natural democrat without any theoretical issues to parade, he sees human nature



as it is and his beliefs survive even this test, and finally he likes all the every day beauties of the country and the farm, animals, fields and meadows, brooks, heathland, down to the tiniest wildflowers. Perhaps it is not strange that we all like his poetry.

It is not practical to make a complete list of the important poems; a few suggestions are all there is space for. The reader is reminded, however, that Burns is at his best in the poems written in the lowland dialect; his experiments in English and in more conventional metres do not so well express the unique qualities of his personality.

From *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock edition 1786): \*\*\* *The Two Dogs*; \*\* *Scotch Drink*; \*\*\* *The Holy Fair*; \*\*\* *Address to the Deil*; \*\*\* *The Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie*; \* *Halloween*; \*\*\* *The Auld Farmer's New-Year Morning Salutation to his Auld Mare, Maggie*; \*\*\* *The Cotter's Saturday Night*; \*\*\* *To a Mouse*; \* *Epistle to Davie*; \*\*\* *To a Mountain Daisy*; \*\*\* *To a Louse*.

From additions in the Edinburgh edition (1787): \*\* *Death and Dr. Hornbook*; \* *The Brigs of Ayr*; \*\*\* *Address to the Unco Guid*; \*\*\* *Address to a Haggis*; \*\*\* *Green Grow the Rashes, O*.

From additions in the Edinburgh edition (1793): \*\*\* *Tam o'Shanter*.

From posthumous pieces: \*\* *The Jolly Beggars*; \*\*\* *Holy Willie's Prayer*; \* *On Holy Willie*.

From songs from Johnson's *Musical Museum* (1796) and Thomson's *Scottish Airs* (1798): \*\* *O, Whistle an' I'll Come to Ye, My Lad*; \*\*\* *I'm o'er Young to Marry yet*; \* *The Birks of Aberfeldie*; \* *Rattlin, Roarin' Willie*; \* *O Tibbie, I hae seen the Day*; \* *My Love, She's but a Lassie Yet*; \*\*\* *My Heart's in the Highlands*; \* *Killiecrankie*; \* *The Banks o' Doon*; \*\* *Sweet Afton*; \* *The Deil's awa wi' th' Exciseman*; \*\*\* *Auld Lang Syne*; \*\*\* *Comin' thro' the Rye*; \*\*\* *Charlie He's My Darling*; \*\*\* *Scots, Wha Hae*; \* *Highland Mary*; \*\*\* *Is There for Honest Poverty*; \* *My Wife's a Winsome Wee Thing*.

*Lij:* J. C. Shairp. English Men of Letters series. 1879.

*Life:* T. F. Henderson. 1904.

*Complete Poems:* Ed. by W. E. Henley. The Cambridge Poets. 1897.

*Lectures on the English Poets:* W. Hazlitt. "Burns and the Old Ballads." 1818.

*Essay on Burns:* T. Carlyle. 1828.

*Familiar Studies of Men and Books:* R. L. Stevenson. Some Aspects of Robert Burns. 1882.

## Eighteenth Century Drama

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. XII.

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*English Drama of the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century, 1642-1780:* G. H. Nettleton. 1914.

\*\* *Early Eighteenth Century Drama, 1700-1750*: Allardyce Nicoll. 1925.

\*\* *Late Eighteenth Century Drama*: Allardyce Nicoll. 1926.

*Shakespeare to Sheridan*: A. Thaler. 1922.

## RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN (1751-1816)

Goldsmith and Sheridan are the only writers of comedy in the eighteenth century whose plays are still read and occasionally met with on the stage. Their plays have survived because of the vitality of their characters blended with, in Goldsmith's comedies, humour, in Sheridan's, wit and humour. As a wit Sheridan is inferior only to Congreve.

Sheridan's wit has the destructive logic of the Irishman and he used it to attack sentimental comedy and the pretentious writers who claimed to teach morality through the medium of the stage. But it is after all in the creation of character that Sheridan is remembered to-day. Mrs. Malaprop, Bob Acres (*The Rivals*), Sir Peter Teazle, Joseph Surface (*The School for Scandal*), and Mr. Puff, the critic (*The Critic*) are a most amusing group.

Three of his plays are read, the rest forgotten. These are \*\*\* *The Rivals* (1775); \*\*\* *The School for Scandal* (1777); *The Critic* (1779). The last makes most delightful fun of all the turgid nonsense that often passed for tragedy in the eighteenth century.

*Sheridan, a Biography*: W. Fraser Rae. 2 vols., 1906.

*Plays*: Everyman's Library.

## MARIA EDGEWORTH (1767-1849)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. XIII.

Maria Edgeworth was the inventor of a new type of story, that of realistic scenes and pictures of domestic life in Ireland. Sir Walter Scott has owned that it was the example of her success with her stories of Irish life which suggested to him similar ventures in writing of Scottish life. Two of Maria Edgeworth's



novels, \* *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and \*\* *The Absentee* (1809), are as good reading as ever they were.

The secret of her attraction for the reader is in the accuracy with which she draws her Irish types and in the picturesqueness with which she uses her local colour. She does not exaggerate, but touches humour and pathos with equal truthfulness, neither heightening her fun after the pattern of the comedy of manners, nor sentimentalizing her pathos with the black velvet of melodrama.

The novels which she wrote before her Irish tales, and her work after these had appeared, have vanished from the recollection of readers, although her dramatic vividness touched all she wrote; seemingly, however, the Irish stories alone have been able to survive into the twentieth century.

*The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth:* A. J. C. Hare. 2 vols., 1894.

*Castle Rackrent* and *The Absentee*. Everyman's Library in one vol.

*De Libris:* A. Dobson. 1908.

On Maria Edgeworth and Kate Greenaway.

## HORACE WALPOLE (1717-1797)

It was Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* that set a fashion in novel writing, a fashion that was to have great importance at the beginning of the next century. This new vogue was a novel with a scene laid in a remote past, and an action that was accompanied by signs, omens, portents, ghosts and all imaginable supernatural paraphernalia, together with horrors of all kinds, including considerable emphasis upon bad weather. These novels, of which *The Castle of Otranto* is the first and most important example of the species, are known to critics by the technical name of Gothic romances.

They are in fact "undisciplined" romances: that is to say, unlike the medieval romances, they bear no relation whatever to reality, but are the product of an extravagant imagination afloat



on a hazy sea of vague ideas about the past and a sentimentalizing over fancied horrors and wonders.

Walpole, however, made a serious claim for his theory of the novel: "it was not so much my intention to recall the glories of ancient romance as to blend the wonderful of old stories with the natural of modern novels." The only objection to this assertion is that the reader is unable to discover any of that blend of the natural in *The Castle of Otranto*. To-day this novel amuses for its sheer extravagance.

The Gothic romance, considered as a movement, is more important than the novels to which it first gave rise. The realistic novel of every day life periodically encounters a reaction against itself. There exist, always, great numbers of readers of fiction who prefer to have day dreams written for them rather than studies of reality. There are probably as great a number who find day dreaming an irritating waste of time and are therefore out of sympathy with novels of romance. Between these two the pendulum swings backward and forward, the arc of its swing at any given time depending often upon the greatness of the novelist who initiated the impulse. In the next century the influence of the Gothic romances was to be felt by Sir Walter Scott. The force he added to the swing of the pendulum was much greater than one could possibly imagine would happen from any evidence one can find in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*.

In addition to this novel, the reader will find Horace Walpole's *Letters*, next to those of Charles Lamb, the most delightful of all collections of English correspondence. There are, the reader should be warned, a vast number of them, but Everyman's Library has a one volume edition of selected ones. A larger collection is *A Selection of the Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. by W. S. Lewis, 2 vols., 1926.

*Life*: D. M. Stuart. English Men of Letters series. 1927.  
*The Castle of Otranto*. Cassell's National Library.

*Horace Walpole, a Memoir:* A. Dobson. 1890.

*Essay on Walpole:* T. B. Macaulay.

*Hours in a Library:* Sir Leslie Stephen.

### The Bluestockings

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. xv.

Frances Burney. *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay* (Fanny Burney), 1778-1840. Ed. by A. Dobson. 1905.

*Dr. Johnson and Fanny Burney:* C. B. Tinker.

Elizabeth Montagu (1720-1800). *Elizabeth Montagu, the Queen of the Blue-Stockings:* E. J. Climensson, 2 vols., 1906. Correspondence 1720 to 1761.

Hannah More (1745-1833). *Hannah More:* A. M. B. Meakin. 1911.

*Famous Blue-Stockings:* E. R. Wheeler. 1910.

*Blue-Stocking Letters:* Selected by R. B. Johnson. 1926.

### Lesser Novelists of the Eighteenth Century

The following list contains titles of novels which for one reason or another belong to the development of English fiction, but which are not so likely to interest a general reader, except his bent be particularly toward fiction.

Henry Brooke (1703?-1783). *The Fool of Quality* (1766-70). Ed. by E. A. Baker, 1906.

William Beckford (1759-1844). \* *Vathek, an Arabian Tale* (1786). Ed. by R. Garnett, 1893.

Henry Mackenzie (1745-1831). *The Man of Feeling* (1771). A sentimental moral tale.

Rudolf Eric Raspe (1737-1794). \* *Baron Munchausen's Narrative* (1785). Ed. by T. Seecombe, 1895.

Clara Reeve (1729-1807). *The Old English Baron* (1777). Rptd. with Memoir by Sir Walter Scott. New ed., 1883.  
A Gothic romance.

Ann Radcliff (1764-1822). *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Selections from her writings are in vol. I of G. Saintsbury: *Tales of Mystery*.

Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818). *The Monk* (1795). New ed., 1907.

Fanny Burney (Mme. d'Arblay) (1752-1840). \*\* *Evelina* (1778). The first important novel by a woman.

### Historians of the Eighteenth Century

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. x, chap. XII.

Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780). *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4 vols., 1765-9. Many modern editions of this legal classic are available.

Oliver Goldsmith. *The History of England from the Earliest Times to the Death of George II*, 1771.

David Hume. *History of Great Britain*. 1778.

William Robertson (1721-1793). *Works*. 1817.

Contains a popular but now superseded history of America.

Tobias George Smollett. *A Compleat History of England*, 1757-1765.



## Political Writers of the Eighteenth Century, 1755-75

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., col. x, chap. xvii.

Edmund Burke. See p. 214.

Charles Churchill (1731-1764). See Dict. Nat. Biog.

"Junius". Anonymous political letters under the signature of "Junius", originally appeared in *The Public Advertiser*. Rptd. 1850. The identity of "Junius" is an unsolved problem. See Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. III.

John Wilkes (1727-1797). *Life and Times of John Wilkes*: P. Fitzgerald. 2 vols., 1888.

## Lesser Prose Writers of the Eighteenth Century

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. ix, chap. v.

John Arbuthnot (1667-1735). *The Life and Works of John Arbuthnot*; G. A. Aitken. 1892. See \* *The History of John Bull*.

John Dennis (1657-1734). *John Dennis, His Life and Criticism*: H. G. Paul. 1911. See also *Critical Essays of the Eighteenth Century, 1700-1725*: Ed. by W. H. Durham. 1915. For essays by Charles Gildon (1665-1724), John Hughes (1677-1720), John Dennis, George Farquhar, Steele, Addison, Pope, and others.

## English Political Writers of the Period of the French Revolution

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. xi, chap. II.

For the political verse satire of this period, see W. J. Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, vols. v and vi.

George Canning (1770-1827). *Life of Canning*: H. W. V. Temperley. 1905.

Charles James Fox (1749-1806). *Charles James Fox, a Commentary on his Life and Character*: W. S. Landor, new ed., by S. Wheeler. 1907. See also Sir G. O. Trevelyan's *The American Revolution*, 1912, concluding part.

Henry Grattan (1746-1820). *Life of Grattan*: R. Dunlop. 1889.

William Pitt (1759-1806). *William Pitt*: C. Whibley. 1906.

## Education

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## Children's Books

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. xi, chap. xvi.

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*English Children in the Olden Time*: E. Godfrey. 1907.

*Forgotten Tales of Long Ago*: E. V. Lucas. 1906.

*Old-Fashioned Tales*: E. V. Lucas. 1905.



## A SELECTED LIST

Jacob Abbott. *Rollo at Work and Rollo at Play*. Everyman's Library.

Charles Lutwidge Dodson (Lewis Carroll) (1832-1898). \*\*\* *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865); \*\*\* *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871); \* *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876). Innumerable editions.

Thomas Day (1748-1789). \* *The History of Sandford and Merton* (1783-9).

Thomas Hughes (1822-1896). \*\*\* *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857).

Maria Edgeworth (1767). *The Parents' Assistant*. 1800.

Andrew Lang. *Fairy Book*, 1849, a series titled by the cover colour.

Edward Lear (1812-1888). \*\*\* *Book of Nonsense* (1846).

Norman Macleod. *The Golden Thread* (1861).

Charlotte Mary Yonge. *A Storehouse of Stories* (1870-2).

Other books suitable for children are mentioned under authors noted more at length.

*Fairy Tales*: \*\*\* The Brothers Grimm. Transl. Everyman's Library.


*Fairy Tales*: \* Hans Christian Andersen. Transl. Everyman's Library.

\*\*\* *Aesop's Fables*. Transl. Everyman's Library.

*Fairy Gold*. A Book of old English Fairy Tales. Everyman's Library.

*Mother Goose's Book of Nursery Rhymes*. Everyman's Library.

## The Nineteenth Century

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## Author

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# THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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*The Age of Wordsworth:* C. H. Herford. 1897.  
*Theology in the English Poets:* S. A. Brooke. 1874. Everyman's Library.  
(Cowper, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Burns.)  
*French Revolution and English Literature:* E. Dowden. 1897.  
*The Literature of the Victorian Era:* H. Walker. 1910.  
*A History of Nineteenth Century Literature, 1780-1895:* G. Saintsbury. 1896.  
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*Women in English Fiction:* C. Whitmore.  
*A Century of the English Novel, 1825-1925:* C. Weygandt. 1927.  
(Scott to Conrad, for the general reader).  
*The Poetry of the Age of Wordsworth:* J. D. Wilson. New ed., 1927. Anthology  
of the five major poets.  
See also the Bibliography of Nineteenth Century Drama.

### HISTORY OF THE AGE

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*British History in the Nineteenth Century:* G. M. Trevelyan.  
*The History of Our Own Times:* J. M. McCarthy. 5 vols.  
*British Foreign Policy:* H. E. Egerton.  
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*Electoral Reform in England and Wales:* Charles Seymour.  
*The Gordon Riots:* P. de Castro. 1927.

## The Nineteenth Century Novel

The novel underwent a great development in the Nineteenth Century. At the beginning of this period, in spite of the achievements of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne, the novel, as a literary form of expression was under a cloud of moral disapproval: that is to say, the reading of novels was regarded as a waste of time on the part of seriously minded people, and consequently the writers of three-volume stories shared in the

general disesteem in which fiction was held. It was, first, Sir Walter Scott who changed this attitude and restored respectability to the art. His creation of the historical novel gave to all an excuse for the reading of fiction, which of late had adopted the garb of poetry as one way of disguising itself in literary clothes, but now that history had become available in so pleasant a shape as stirring prose-narrative fiction no longer had to hide by candle-light under young ladies' pillows.

The spread of education and the rapid increase in population which followed the expansion of industry in England upon the application to manufacturing enterprises of the recently invented steam-engine, made possible a reading public greater in size than any the Eighteenth Century had known. Reading was no longer an aristocratic art, but had now become a democratic pastime. Coincident with the growth of this new reading public, came the rise of the newspaper and periodical magazine. Both newspaper and magazine assumed, and came to possess, an importance in social life hitherto unknown. The magazine, with its demand for stories and longer fiction, was thus a factor of great consequence in the ascent of the novel to the pinnacle of public favour. By the end of the century, the novel had become the most popular of literary forms.

It is not possible to describe or even to label, except in very general terms, the characteristics of nineteenth century fiction. It is best considered in the great names associated with it, each unquestioned great name drawing after it a host of imitators and at the same time accompanied by a secondary group of other names only a little less great. Rather as a statement of accidental fact than as any attempt at a false symmetry, it is possible to enumerate six great novelists, two at the beginning, two in the middle, and two at the end of the Nineteenth Century. These are, in chronological order, Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen; William Makepeace Thackeray and Charles Dickens; George Meredith and Thomas Hardy.



Close behind these are another group, able to look over the shoulders of the first six if not to stand exactly on a level with them. These are: Charles Kingsley, Charles Reade, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot and Robert Louis Stevenson. Of these the one name with considerable claim to be added to the first six is that of George Eliot.

The general reader has a right to ask the grounds which have determined this seemingly arbitrary classification. The selection has been made by a countless host of readers, who have carried over into the twentieth century their preferences among these writers of fiction with the result here set down. This is not to say that every general reader would *ipso facto* agree with the list here given, but dissentients are reminded that in this democratic age truth goes by majorities. Were a critic consulted, he might without more ado take George Eliot's name from the second list and add it, somewhat emphatically, to the first. Of late, however, the general reader has not been reading his George Eliot with the same enthusiasm that he had a generation or two ago.

The first six names reveal the more important characteristics through which the novel passed in the nineteenth century. First came the historical novel, full of action on a large scale. Even then, parallel with it was the delicate realism of Jane Austen, working at contemporary life on a minute and detailed scale. Her ironic humour foreshadowed at a great distance the coming of George Meredith's *Comic Spirit*.

Then, with the growth of industrialism and its crowded cities and slums, together with the rise of democracy following the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832, social and political questions pushed themselves to the fore, and the novel that took such themes for its purpose or background came into being. Early among these were the novels of Benjamin Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, Charles Kingsley's *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*, and the works of George Eliot. In Charles Dickens these new themes are evi-



dent, so that he illustrates one characteristic of fiction in the mid-century. Thackeray, on the other hand, portrays the comedy of manners at the turn of the century, having, perhaps, less that was new to say, but invaluable nevertheless as a politer Fielding turned somewhat prudish.

George Eliot founded the psychological novel, a story in which men's motives are as important as their actions, if not more so. This analysis of men's inner souls was carried to a profound conclusion by George Meredith in *The Egoist*. He, too, clings to the comedy of manners of Fielding, Jane Austen, and Thackeray, but he surveys this comedy through the intellectual vision of his almost terrifying Comic Spirit. Philosophy has crept into the novel, until the novel has become an illustration of a philosophical text.

In Thomas Hardy, philosophy takes complete control of the story and is relentless in working out a tragic destiny for men in a world which nineteenth century materialism has discovered to be a chemical accident set whirling by chance. Men's motives are more important often than their actions, but no man, at the time, is capable of judging which motive and which action is afterwards to turn out of importance in determining his course through life, while environment clings to him, shaping his character and leaving his plans and hopes no escape from the chaos of chance.

There is more than a century, there is an infinity, of difference between Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Hardy. Sir Walter is buoyant and confident, gazing happily backward at a medieval world full of colour and noble deeds; Thomas Hardy, on the sands of a Wessex shore hearing the same roar of the waters as Matthew Arnold heard on the shingles of Dover Beach is disillusioned by the fairy tales of science, seeing only chance as shaper of each wave as it rolls up, gazing at a world over which the Outer Spirit no longer has control.

From the dawn of the romantic movement, a dawn that was

rosy pink and revealed a world of wonder and beauty, the sun at the end of the century set in the dark clouds of scientific materialism, which seemed to blot out all hope. This shaking of man's faith is perhaps the most characteristic difference brought about in the nineteenth century. A world had changed from an agricultural countryside to a congestion of cities and industrial factories; from the gleam of a candle on an altar to the significance of a light reflected from a test tube in the hands of a scientist. At the end of the century, the road ahead was no longer clear: it seemed to lead straight into darkness. The whole soul's tragedy may be read in the novels of the age, from the joy of living of Sir Walter Scott to the dread of life in Thomas Hardy. To understand it all, in all its pity and terror, the poetry and science of the age must be read, too, for the novel is but the passing panorama. The explanation and understanding of it require still wider knowledge.

In the section that follows individual novelists are briefly commented upon with a view of presenting a clue to a method of approach. Not every novelist, obviously, is for every reader, though a chosen few are. It is the purpose of the notes to furnish a guide and to suggest which novels are the most likely to interest the general reader.

## SIR WALTER SCOTT

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. I.

### *The Poet*

It is without sense to classify Sir Walter Scott twice, as poet and as novelist, therefore he will be considered here in both these aspects under the section devoted to the Nineteenth Century novelists. His readers in going through his works are as certain to pause over *The Lady of the Lake* and *Marmion* as they are to single out *Waverley* or *Ivanhoe*. He has many of the same elements in his poetry as in his fiction, namely a stirring tale, a love of the past, and above all a love of his country.



Sir Walter's poetry is entirely free from any of the pseudo-romantic taints that touched some of his contemporaries. He seeks no new philosophy, for he has never questioned his conservative creed instinctively accepted. His soul was normal and healthy, wholly free from spiritual disorders, Shelleyan or Byronic; he had no violent longing to escape from reality, nor intense conviction that the times were out of joint. If they were at all, the radicals were to blame, and a little old fashioned common-sense would dispose of that tribe. Possibly the pothos these made over their French revolution and theoretical republicanism may have been a partial cause of his turning his back on the present to live in his imagination of the past, but it is even more probable that he loved the past because he had that kind of mind. He was naturally a student and antiquarian who early came across the old ballad poetry, and his own productions followed naturally from his main interests. Sir Walter's romanticism, whether in poetry or prose, is above all intensely masculine.

Scott's literary career began with the publication of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3), a miscellaneous collection of ballads and poems, not all of them related to the border country. The result of his study and collection of old ballads was the writing of \*\* *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), a romantic story supposed to be recited by a minstrel.

\*\*\* *Marmion* (1808) followed, a tale of Flodden Field, his object being, as he described it, "to paint the manners of feudal times on a broader scale and in the course of a more interesting story." The emphasis, the author tells us, is on description, and the poem is a series of vivid, often changing scenes, in which the character of Lord Marmion is of less importance than the pictures of the times. The description reaches its climax in the account of the battle of Flodden Field. (See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. III, chap. 16).

\*\*\* *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) was inspired by the beauty of



Loch Katrine and the Trossachs, a region which he made the locale of the poem. The story is one of incident in which dangers and adventures follow one another, described with the same profusion of colour and detail as in *Marmion*.

Finally, as lyric poet not only for the songs interpolated in the poetic romances but also scattered through his novels he deserves to rank high. The best of these are now accessible in many anthologies, nevertheless for the convenience of the reader the following are suggested:

From *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*: Canto II i, viii-xi, Melrose Abbey; Canto IV, i, ii, Sweet Teviot; Canto VI, i, ii, Caledonia; Canto VI, xi, xii, Albert Græme. From *Rokeby*: Canto III, xvi, xvii, O, Brignal Banks; Canto III, xxx, Allen-a-Dale; Canto V, xxiii, xxiv, The Farewell. *The Eve of Saint John*. *The Maid of Neidpath*. *Hunting Song*. *Jock of Hazeldean*. *Pibroch of Donald Dhu*. *Farewell to the Muse*. *Bonny Dundee*.

At the age of forty-three, Sir Walter turned from poetry to novel writing. The growing fame of Byron was in part the cause of the change, for, to quote Scott, "he beat me out of the field in description of the stronger passions and in deep-seated knowledge of the human heart." In any event, Sir Walter had about come to the end of his inspiration in the field of poetic romance, and the decision to write prose was a fortunate one for English literature.

### *The Novelist*

Probably no other writer of fiction, with the possible exception of Charles Dickens, has ever been more popular, in the best sense of this abused adjective, than Sir Walter Scott. Nor is it any exaggeration to say that many of his novels to-day outsell many so-called "best-sellers." The reason is not far to seek: as a vivid teller of tales Sir Walter is without an equal. It matters little if his characters lack depth, or if his history is now and then inaccurate; he contrives, nevertheless, to hold his readers' interest in the sweep of his story. He writes romance in the grand manner

and on a magnificent scale, so that the imagination of the reader is captured and held spell-bound. It is his capacity to impart to the reader his own passion for the stirring events of the past that explains his secret. The surplus of his imagination lends imagery even to readers who have none of their own. The dullest man, on picking up a volume by Sir Walter suddenly hears the cry "boot, saddle, to horse and away," thus losing himself in a new world of glorious adventure.

Nor should Sir Walter be looked down upon as a historian because, in making history interesting, he is sometimes inaccurate. He is always right as far as the great panorama is concerned; it is only in the minutiae of the foreground that he may be charged with falsification, or rather, with a certain distortion for the sake of dramatic emphasis. The fact remains that we owe to Sir Walter Scott a revival of popular interest in history, in architecture, and the manners and customs of the past, without which the world would inevitably sink into a provincial self-complacency. The man who believes that he can learn nothing from the past, because the past is necessarily out of date, is not likely to accomplish much of value for the future. From what was one may often guess what will be. Unless one looks backward as well as forward, the present is sterile. Last, but not least, Sir Walter had an old-fashioned faith in a sane patriotism. He loved his country and was not ashamed to proclaim his faith. In this age of intellectual superiority the very adjective "patriotic" has become a term of reproach. Fortunately, Sir Walter had no doubts about the reality of the abstract idea of patriotism, and his glorification of the Scotland of the past has made better Scotsmen, Englishmen and better Americans of countless thousands.

Sir Walter has referred to Fielding as "the father of the English novel"; he admired Smollett; and he has confessed that, but for the success attained by Maria Edgeworth in her Irish tales, he might never have thought of attempting a novel of



Scottish life. He had also a passion for his native town of Edinburgh with its grey, sombre Canongate that even to-day cries aloud with the voice of the past. Further, he was nurtured on the old border tales and ballads, his lameness setting him apart from other boys, making of him what he has described as "a tolerable reader." Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and other tales of terror were among his early readings, as well as Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. He read Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* "with a delight which may be imagined but cannot be described." Antiquarian expeditions into the Highlands also played their part in the development of his imagination.

Foreign literature, French, Italian, and German likewise contributed to his mental development. Of these three, his interest in German romanticism was probably the strongest influence. Bürger's ballads, Goethe, Schiller and others "powerfully attracted him." It was the pure romance of German literature, the narratives themselves and not its mystical and metaphysical sides that attracted him. It may be said that his interest in German romance lay in its kinship with the border ballads rather than in its other aspects.

Much has been made of the influence upon him of hearing a casual recital of Coleridge's *Christabel*, then unpublished, but as a matter of fact Scott's chief borrowing in poetry was of the ballad metre; there is no trace of Coleridge's fantastic supernaturalism in the sanity of Sir Walter's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

For the historical backgrounds of his novels he relied mainly on the old chronicles, as may be seen to-day by even a cursory inspection of his library still preserved intact at Abbotsford.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to make a selection from the novels of Scott that will fairly represent him, or please all tastes. The true follower of Sir Walter will go on reading him all his life, and thus ultimately work his way through the whole list.



The stars, therefore, on the following entries suggest rather the approach than a final selection.

\*\*\* *Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since.* 1814.

Period, 1745-6. The invasion of the Young Pretender, Charles Edward. The historical episodes are the background against which are shown the lives of the people of the time.

\*\* *Guy Mannering, or The Astrologer.* 1815.

Period, 1750-1770. Dandie Dinmont, the 'first of Scott's gypsy types and Meg Merrilies are the two most famous characters in this story.

\* *The Antiquary.* 1816.

1795. Scene, Perthshire. The plot is not very probable, containing a mixture of superstition with incidents of real life. The best remembered character in it is daft Edie Ochiltree.

*Tales of My Landlord.* (*The Black Dwarf*, Period, 1706, and \*\* *Old Mortality* Period, 1679.) 1816.

*Tales of My Landlord.* Second Series. (\* *The Heart of Midlothian*, Period, 1736.) 1818. Background, the famous riots in Edinburgh. Jeanie Deans is a great character study. The court scene in which Effie Deans is accused of child-murder and her sister will not tell a lie to save her is Scott's drama at its best.

\*\*\* *Rob Roy.* 1818.

Period, 1715. Scenes around Glasgow and the Lakes. Rob Roy is an idealized figure, a Scottish Robin Hood. The ending of the story is forced, but it is a great yarn for all that.

*Tales of My Landlord.* Third Series. \*\*\* *The Bride of Lammermoor*,<sup>1</sup> Period 1695, and *The Legend of Montrose*, Period 1645-6. 1819.

\*\*\* *Ivanhoe.* 1820.

Period, 1194. Richard the Lion-hearted, Robin Hood. Saxon and Norman. This is Scott's first venture into English history. A magnificent historical romance full of colour and exciting incidents. See also Thackeray's burlesque *Rebecca and Rowena*. Freeman, the historian of the Norman conquest, attacked the accuracy of Scott's historical facts.

*The Monastery.* 1820.

The Scottish Border and the Reformation, 1550. Scene, in and around Melrose. Conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, a Euphuistic character, and a mysterious supernatural White Lady, the whole made up by Sir Walter in not a very happy blend.

*The Abbot.* 1820.

Mary Stuart during 1567-8. It contains an admirable portrait of the queen, and a splendidly written scene in which she is forced to sign her abdication.

\*\* *Kenilworth.* 1821.

Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester and Amy Robsart, 1575. Founded on the old ballad of Cumnor Hall. It is a composite picture of the Elizabethan age in which Sir Walter took several liberties with chronology.

*The Pirate.* 1822.

Scene, the Orkneys, period 1700. The story of a pirate who came ashore and fell in love with a girl. A romance of the sea was less in Sir Walter's line.

<sup>1</sup> A tragic romance of revenge abandoned and of a heroine driven mad.

**\*\**The Fortunes of Nigel*. 1822.**

James I of England, 1604. A realistic picture of Jacobean life. London at this time was filled with Scottish adventurers.

**\**Peveril of the Peak*. 1822.**

Charles II, Titus Oates, 1678. This is another study of history in realistic purpose.

**\*\*\**Quentin Durward*. 1823.**

Louis XI and the Burgundian wars in France. This is Sir Walter's brand of historical romance at its best.

*Tales of the Crusades*. (Vols. I and II, *The Betrothed*; Period, 1187. Vols. III and IV, **\*\**The Talisman***; Period 1189-92, the Third Crusade.) 1825.

Sir Walter has painted the crusades more vividly than any other writer.

**\**Woodstock: or the Cavalier*. 1826.**

The Cromwellian rebellion, 1651-2.

*Chronicles of the Canongate*. (*The Highland Widow*; *The Two Drovers*; and *The Surgeon's Daughter*). 1827.

*Chronicles of the Canongate*. Second Series. (*St. Valentine's Day; or The Fair Maid of Perth*.) 1828.

Subject, feuds of the Scottish clans, 1402.

*Anne of Geierstein; or The Maiden of the Mist*. 1829.

*Tales of My Landlord*. Fourth and last series. (*Count Robert of Paris and Castle Dangerous*.) 1832.

The period of Count Robert is 1098, the time of the First Crusade. *Castle Dangerous* is a tale of the war of Scottish Independence, 1306-7.

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**\*\*\**Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Baronet*. J. G. Lockhart. 10 vols. 1839.**

This work is a classic among biographies.

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*Sir Walter Scott*: T. Carlyle. (*Westminster Review*. Vol. XXVIII. 1838.) Rptd. in *Collected Essays*.

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*The Waverley Novels*: W. Bagehot. (*National Review*. Vol. VI. 1858. Rptd. in *Literary Studies*. 2nd ed. Vol. II. 1884.)

*The Historical Novel*: G. Saintsbury. *Essays in English Literature, 1780-1860*. Second Series. 1895.

*Hours in a Library*: Sir Leslie Stephen. Vol. I. New ed. 1907.

*The Waverley Novels*: C. A. Young. 1907.

*Scott and the Border Minstrelsy*: A. Lang. 1910.

*Scott and his Poetry*: A. E. Morgan. 1910.

## JANE AUSTEN (1775-1817)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. X.

Jane Austen is one of the supreme geniuses in the field of the English novel. She is the creator of the novel the main interest of which lies in character and not in incident. She combines



with accuracy of observation a keen wit and a fresh, delightful sense of humour. Her novels are a protest against the absurdities of the Gothic romance popular at the close of the eighteenth century. Her characters, therefore, are the ordinary, everyday country gentlefolk of real life; their adventures, the humdrum events of the village and small country town. She has pictured only what she has seen and known, using her imagination not to create unreal lands and creatures of sentimental heroics, but to pierce with her seeing-eye into the mind and heart of human nature. She has rightly been called "the critic of romance and of manners." To enjoy reading Jane Austen one must be as interested as she is in people and have for the commonplace happenings of this world a relish that comes with a tolerant, un-biased smile or sympathetic tear.

Her stories are, moreover, well planned. They are not mere galleries of accurately painted portraits, for they possess a balance and proportion which reveal their creator as sensitive to a feeling of form as she is clear-headed in her estimate of people.

Jane Austen was not a widely read or scholarly writer. Her reading, in general, followed the popular authors of her day, much as would be the case with any well-educated person of literary tastes of the present time to whom reading was not a matter of professional necessity. Harold Child<sup>1</sup> says of her fiction that "its ancestors were the work of Defoe, the Roger de Coverly papers in *The Spectator*, the fiction of Fielding, and of Richardson, the poems of Cowper and the poetical tales of Crabbe. Another influence upon her was the work of Fanny Burney. Jane Austen described her method as "a little piece of ivory two inches wide on which I work with a brush too fine to get any large effect."

The modern reader who likes Jane Austen at all will end by reading all her novels, but for the beginner \*\*\* *Pride and Prejudice*

<sup>1</sup> Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. X.



(Publ. 1813; first begun in 1796) should be chosen. This novel is her masterpiece both in form and characterization. In it are shown at their best her sense of humour, delicate irony, accuracy of observation, and witty appreciation of reality. The Bennett family, as she has created them, have taken their place among the immortals of English literature. The story is of Elizabeth's prejudice against her wealthy suitor, and of the latter's pride. Each conquers the faults.

Next in interest is \*\* *Emma* (1816), "a heroine," said the author, "whom no one but myself will much like." With this statement, however, the world has disagreed, for Emma is probably a greater favourite than any other single character in Jane Austen's novels.

\*\* *Northanger Abbey* (Publ. 1818; first begun in 1798) is of a different type from the two just mentioned. It was planned as a burlesque on such Gothic romances as Mrs. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, but became, during the course of its writing, more important than a parody of fiction. It is a penetrating satire on the imaginary world of the romancers revealed by means of a contrast with the world as it is. Chapter IV is famous for containing her defence of the novel as a form of art.

A reader who has gone through these three will probably complete his list by reading \* *Sense and Sensibility* (Publ. 1811; written at various times from 1797 to 1809) and *Mansfield Park* (publ. 1814). The former is inferior to *Pride and Prejudice* only because the characters and the structure of the novel are not completely fused. *Mansfield Park* has in Fanny Price another example of sustained character portrayal.

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The standard edition of her works is that of 1822, containing a memoir by J. E. Austen-Leigh.

\*\* *Letters*: Ed. by Edward, Lord Brabourne. 1884.

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\* *Life of Jane Austen*: Goldwin Smith. (Great Writers series.) 1890.

\* *Jane Austen*: F. W. Cornish. (English Men of Letters series.) 1913.

*On Jane Austen*: Sir Walter Scott. (*Quarterly Review*. Oct., 1815.) Rptd. in *Famous Reviews*. Ed. R. B. Johnson. 1914.

*Opinion of Jane Austen*: Lord Macaulay. (In art. on *Mme. D'Arblay*. *Edinburgh Review*, Jan., 1843.) Rptd. in *Critical and Historical Essays Contributed to the Edinburgh Review*. Ed. F. C. Montague. Vol. III. 1903.

*Jane Austen: Her Contemporaries and Herself*. W. H. Pollock. 1899.

*Jane Austen and Her Times*: G. E. Mitton. 1905.

## THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK (1785-1866)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. XIII.

Peacock was an eccentric man, a statement which usually means that a few conventional friends have invented a label to account for what they could not understand. His eccentricity consisted in the fact that he possessed a Shaw-like diabolic sense of humour, an intellectual humour that scorches like a hot blast the paper flowers of rhetoric and other shams. On the other hand, the imp of humour that dwelt in him shared the habitation with a spirit of romance and the offspring of this pair were the novels Peacock wrote. Obviously, such paradoxical children were doomed to perplex critics and annoy a public who like to have things in plainly marked packages.

Enough time has now passed, however, for twentieth century readers to approach Peacock with an open mind. If some will do this, they will find some amusing books. There are at least four suitable for experiment: *Headlong Hall* (1816); *Nightmare Abbey* (1818); *Maid Marian* (1822; and *The Misfortunes of Elphin* (1829).

The first two are by way of being social satires, presenting various caricatured types, burlesque events, and comment upon the absurdities of the day in philosophy, politics, and literature, together with a passing shot or two at social abuses. The portraits of certain literary men, seen afar off, also appear.

The last two are satirical romances, burlesquing the novel of horror and the historical novel, yet with a quality of their own



beyond parody or satire. He seldom fails to amuse, and the ability to do this, as Molière reminded us, may be a strange trade, but, as Molière did not say, but exemplified it, is one that requires a measure of genius to accomplish.

*Life*: J. B. Priestley. English Men of Letters series. 1927.

*Life of T. L. Peacock*: C. Van Doren. 1911.

*Headlong Hall* and *Nightmare Abbey*. Everyman's Library, one vol.

*Misfortunes of Elphin* and *Crotchet Castle*. World's Classics series.

*Maid Marian* in *Collected Prose Works*: Ed. by R. Garnett, 10 vols., 1891.

*Essays in English Literature, 1780-1860*: G. Saintsbury. 1890. "Essay on Peacock."

Note also from Shelley's *Maria Gisborne* this passage on Peacock:

"His fine wit  
Makes such a wound the knife is lost in it;  
A strain too learned for a shallow age,  
Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page,  
Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,  
Fold itself up for the serener clime  
Of years to come, and find its recompense  
In that just expectation."

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. IX.

Thackeray along with Dickens has of late been the victim of a hostile judgment on the part of some of the younger critics who profess advanced ideas. "Victorian," as an adjective of reproach, is the mildest of the derogatory qualifications of their opinions, to which they add "sentimental," "discursive," "lacking in a sense of form and precision," and so on, until older readers rub their eyes and wonder why it is that these defects have not destroyed the man. Then, if one of these older readers will pick up \*\*\* *Vanity Fair* (1848) again, he will be even more astonished, since he can find little to find fault with, technically or otherwise, in its pages, and he will further wonder what superior masterpiece of the present generation these younger critics have in mind when they loftily refer to Thackeray, or Dickens, as representatives of a vogue that is dead and gone.



It is true that Thackeray in his novels is guilty of one offense which modern critics for arbitrary reasons find irritating: he pauses to comment upon his stories, acting as chorus, for the benefit of the reader, to his dramas. These interruptions, we are told, destroy unity and the illusion of reality. Further, we are instructed by these critics, Flaubert discovered the correct way to write a novel and that is, first, to keep the author's self rigidly out of it; second, to write the story from a single viewpoint. If we grant the infallibility of these rules, we shall have to bar out not only Thackeray, and some lesser lights, but a greater luminary than any of them, Henry Fielding. The conclusion is, therefore, absurd. A great deal of the charm and delight, for example, of Fielding and Thackeray are their digressions and intimate conversations with the reader. The truth is that there are no infallible rules for writing novels. In this particular art, novel-writing, it is the result that matters, not the method of its achievement. Judged by results Thackeray is still a great novelist,—great because his best novels are a source of pleasure that the passing of half a century and more has in no way dimmed.

Thackeray went through a long apprenticeship before the first numbers of *Vanity Fair* began to appear. He had contributed stories, essays, and sketches to *Punch* and to other periodical magazines, among them one of his earliest studies of a rogue and professional gambler, the farce with the bitter-tragic ending entitled \* *The Amours of Mr. Deuceace*.

Characters who live by their wits were special objects of Thackeray's satire from the beginning, possibly because of an experience with a specimen of the Mr. Deuceace tribe in early youth. But his rogues have nothing of the Bulwer-Lytton chivalrous highwayman about them—quite the contrary. They are often as grimly and remorselessly drawn as some of Fielding's "low" types, with, however, this important difference: Thackeray portrays them with a more deliberate emphasis upon the moral warn-

ing intended. He is saved, on the other hand, by his sense of humour from becoming merely a preacher of ethics. Now Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair* is one of his rogues, but a most fascinating and charming one. Her roguery is chiefly the total lack of scruple with which she strives for social advancement and security. Becky herself says that she could have been a good woman on a thousand a year.

The background of *Vanity Fair* is in part historical, for it contains a dramatic picture of the Duchess of Richmond's ball held on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo. In general, however, the picture is of Mayfair, and of how it is possible to live in Curzon Street on nothing a year. It has a great gallery of portraits from the green-eyed unscrupulous Becky herself, Lord Steyne, the sensual hedonist, to the faithful Dobbin, Sir Pitt and even the sweet, insipid Amelia (for some sweet girls are insipid), who by the time the story comes to an end, have taken their places among one's favourite characters in fiction.

Cynical and sentimental in many places this novel may be, but the cynicism and the sentimentalism are remarkably like these qualities as they are met with in real life. Just as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* stands foremost at the beginning of the century, so does *Vanity Fair* stand out at the mid-point.

Not very far below, yet recognizably below *Vanity Fair* come \*\* *Pendennis* (1849-50) and \*\* *The Newcomes* (1853-55). The former is partly an autobiographical novel of Thackeray's youth in the Bohemian London of that day; the latter, a superb character-portrait of that old English gentleman, Colonel Newcome, a Belisarius of the Nineteenth Century. It is difficult to find in all English fiction a more touching scene than at the end of this novel when Colonel Newcome answers to his name for the last time.

Last to be mentioned here is Thackeray's great historical novel \*\*\* *Henry Esmond* (1852). Once before, in *The Luck of Barry*



*Lyndon* (1844), he had experimented with the historical novel (the historical background of *Vanity Fair* has already been referred to), and in *Esmond* he steps at once to a place very near, if not at the top in this kind of fiction. The period is that of the reign of Queen Anne and the campaigns of the great Duke of Marlborough, but the story against this background is of the love of Henry Esmond first for Beatrix, the heartless, self-centred beauty, and finally for her mother, Lady Castlewood, a psychological study of profound analysis, told through the difficult medium of using Henry Esmond himself as the narrator.

The sequel, *The Virginians* (1859), as is almost proverbial with sequels, is not so interesting a book.

Among the other writings of Thackeray a reader will do well to browse for himself, but a few additional suggestions may be ventured: \* *Memoirs of C. J. Yellowplush*; \* *Catherine* (to which reference has already been made, as a rebuttal by Thackeray of the sentimentalizing of criminals); \* *Men's Wives*; \*\* *The Book of Snobs*; \*\* *Novels by Eminent Hands*; \* *Rebecca and Rowena*, (a burlesque of Scott's *Ivanhoe*); \* *The English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* (lectures in literary criticism, especially good on Fielding); \* *The Four Georges*; \* *Roundabout Papers*.

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*Works*: Ed. by G. Saintsbury. 17 vols., 1908.

*Christmas Books*; *English Humourists* and *The Four Georges*; *Henry Esmond*; *The Newcomes*, 2 vols.; *Pendennis*, 2 vols.; *Roundabout Papers*; *Vanity Fair*; *The Virginians*, 2 vols. Everyman's Library.

Many other editions.

#### CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. x.

Reference has already been made to the less favourable estimates of the merits of Thackeray and Dickens by some of the



present generation of critics, estimates which in the case of Thackeray may have diminished the numbers of his readers, an effect not so noticeable in regard to Dickens. The popularity of his more important novels continues unabated as far as the mass of general readers is concerned. To be rather well grounded in Scott and Dickens and able to understand any ordinary reference to Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* are accomplishments still regarded as the foundation for any knowledge of English literature. American tourists in London still visit in their thousands the so-called old curiosity shop off Lincoln's Inn Fields and other haunts of Dickens and his characters, just as in their thousands they pass each year through Walter Scott's library at Abbotsford. Yet Dickens has the greater number of pilgrims, few of whom, by the way, may be heard asking their way to Curzon Street or appear to be aware that a great art collection that they visit is in the former reputed residence of Becky Sharp's Marquis of Steyne.

These pilgrims to the shrines of Dickens are mentioned because they illustrate the kind of hold that Dickens has on the imagination of his readers. He has created in men's minds a whole world with a group of quaint and curious inhabitants so real that those coming from across the ocean still confidently expect to find it and its people actually in existence. It would be cruel, were it not totally useless, for critics to inform these idolaters that this world of Dickens and very few of its people ever existed. Strangely enough, moreover, although the critics are technically right, the worshippers of Dickens are right, too, and to a greater degree, if a comparative of "right" may be permitted. It is precisely in this time-and-critic defying hold upon one's imagination that Dickens's genius is to be found. It is for this reason one is certain that he is a great writer.

His whole secret may not be analyzed, but a word or two of explanation is possible. He makes, first of all, of real life a world of charming romance where simple events are often pro-

found adventures, at the same time, strangely convincing the reader that his romantic world is a real one—somewhere. Who has not dreamed of spending Christmas at the Manor House, Dingley Dell? Read *The Pickwick Papers* and the longing is created. Or who is there of soul so dead who would not jump at the chance to spend an evening in the old boat on the sands of Yarmouth? *David Copperfield* can make one wish for this experience. The American first landing in England, it is safe to say, carries with him mental pictures of London and of English life that are largely created from his reading of Dickens.

And this world, this England he makes us believe in, is peopled by an extraordinary gallery of unforgettable characters. They are actually a part of our experience of life, as familiar to us as some proverbs. Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller and his father, Mr. Jingle, the heartless rogue whose heart of gold is at last found in prison, Mrs. Leo Hunter, author of the great lyric *The Expiring Frog*,—to choose almost at random from *The Pickwick Papers*; Mr. Micawber, the immortal optimist, the tragic Steerforth, old Pegotty, Aunt Betsy Trotwood with her anxieties, among them Mr. Dick and his fated memorials, and Agnes, to rebuke those who say Dickens cannot draw fine women—these from *David Copperfield*; Oliver asking for more, Fagin, instructor of pickpockets, Bill Sykes and his dog, Nancy—out of *Oliver Twist*; Vincent Crummles and his theatrical troupe—to say no more of *Nicholas Nickleby*; Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness, Mrs. Jarley—*The Old Curiosity Shop*; the list of characters could be carried on for pages with additions from these novels and the others not yet referred to, but enough have been enumerated to show why the critics are in no danger of abolishing Dickens.

No other novelist has offered us such a profusion of unforgettable people. Call them, if you wish, eccentrics, caricatures, unlike any human beings in the world we know, they are yet alive in Dickens's pages and continue to live in our memories when the



creations of other writers have as often as not passed entirely out of our recollections.

As for the so-called sentimental world of Dickens, it is nevertheless a place where the ordinary decencies are respected and the cruelties of social existence are hated. Right and wrong are clear and easy to distinguish, but we recognize them for wearing their familiar garb. There is, it is true, no psychological hair-splitting on these questions, but there is a genial, honest, commonsense attitude toward them, and one capable of deep anger against the wrong, a point of view that ordinary readers instinctively like and respect. It may not be scientific or "ultra modern," but it is a true attitude, nevertheless.

His hatred of wrong places Dickens among "the novelist with a purpose." Specific abuses such as imprisonment for debt, the delays of the Court of Chancery, the administration of the poor law, the cruelties of some types of private schools, the ill-treatment of children are among the objects of his attacks. Some of these questions are no longer live issues. In no instance, however, does his "purpose," even when the issue is no longer a live one, affect the interest in his story. In sum, the true secret of Dickens is that reading him gives a greater degree of pleasure than is derivable from any other novelist.

The novels listed below are recommended to the general reader, and include his major works.

\*\*\* *The Pickwick Papers* (1837) is his masterpiece. It has a quality of humour that is universal in its appeal to the English-speaking world—a humour that is in part shrewd observation and in part preposterous nonsense.

\*\* *Oliver Twist* (1838) has a less interesting story, yet its imperishable elements place it high in Dickens's list. It exposes the abuse of waifs in workhouses, and pictures the criminal underworld of London.

\*\* *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–39) is more rambling and loosely



constructed as a story, but is superb in individual characters and scenes. It is, at the beginning, an attack upon the abuses of Yorkshire boarding-schools.

\*\* *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840) is a story of enduring interest particularly for its pictures of London. Contains a strong element of pathos. The famous characters are Quilp, Dick Swiveller, the Marchioness.

\* *Barnaby Rudge* is Dickens's first experiment with a novel of historical background. It deals with the so-called Gordon riots of 1780, but in spite of the vivid descriptions of these disturbances, the main interest is not in the history, but in the story and characters created by Dickens.

\*\*\* *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843) with its not always complimentary sketches of America, although actually slavery was the chief American abomination in Dickens's eyes, is, as far as minor characters go, one of the richest of his novels. A few names alone will remind the reader of the importance of this novel: the Pecksniffs, Mark Tapley, and Mrs. Sarah Gamp.

\*\* *Dombey and Son* (1847-48) is meant to be a study in realism—a picture of the manners of contemporary society. The society selected is that of the City merchant. It is an exposure of the banking and mercantile life of the times. Captain Cuttle is another silencer of criticism.

\*\*\* *David Copperfield* (1849-50) is second only to *Pickwick*, if indeed it be second, as a masterpiece. The earlier portions of the novel, the adventures of David's boyhood, are autobiographical with a thin disguise of fiction. The character of Mr. Micawber is founded upon that of Dickens's father. For wealth of material and sustained interest as a story this novel is exceeded only by Fielding's *Tom Jones*.

\*\* *Bleak House* (1852-3) with its dramatization of the Court of chancery and its truly tragic story of Lady Dedlock is one of the most powerful of his examples of narrative. Modern critics

are perhaps unduly severe upon the structure and characters of this novel, possibly because its tone is more serious than is usual with Dickens, and therefore the novel invites a more strict examination, nevertheless the impression upon the ordinary reader is one of great power. If the novel is called a melodrama such a conclusion is in the nature of an after-thought which hardly arises during the reading.

*Hard Times* (1854) has less of Dickens's geniality and almost none of his charm. There are, to be sure, the Gradgrinds, recognizable characters from his peculiar world, but on the whole this novel can be more easily spared than any others on his list. It was dedicated to Carlyle and is an attack upon the social effects of Utilitarianism.

\* *Little Dorrit* (1857-58) with its burlesque of government red-tape in the Circumlocution Office and its vivid scenes in the Marshalsea debtors' prison has a large amount of the best of Dickens, yet it is a novel that, in places, tempts the reader to skip.

\*\* *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) is the second of Dickens's historical novels, the material of the background being based upon Carlyle's *The French Revolution*. Dickens's defects, exaggeration of character and of light and shade in incident, are more apparent in a historical novel than when he is making a world in his own imagination. The main incident of the plot, Sydney Carton's sacrifice of his life to save the husband of the woman he loves, is, apparently, of enduring popularity. The incident has undeniable dramatic effectiveness, but for a general picture of the French Revolution Carlyle's dramatization of history is a more reliable fiction.

\*\*\* *Great Expectations* (1860-61) completes the cycle of great novels, revealing at the end of his career the same freshness and vigour that distinguish *Pickwick* and *Copperfield*.

*Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65) will be read by the lovers of



Dickens who wish to read all he has written, and the unfinished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) will be read on its own merits. It has become one of the problems of Dickens for those who try to guess or infer what the ending was to be. So successfully has Dickens concealed the mystery that as yet no thoroughly satisfactory solution has been offered. A whole literature on this subject has been written.

In addition to the great novels Dickens has left a vast amount of short stories, sketches, and above all deservedly famous Christmas books, such as \*\* *A Christmas Carol* (1843), and \*\* *The Cricket on the Hearth*, (1846).

\* *American Notes* (1842) are now remote enough in time to be read with interest and not with the irritation that arose upon their first arrival in the United States. Like Mrs. Trollope before him, Dickens found that manners on river steamboats in the earlier years of the nineteenth century left a good deal to be desired. As for slavery, he hated it, and said so at a time when abolitionists were looked upon in America somewhat as social outcasts. It is possibly worth mentioning that upon his second visit to America, some twenty years after, Dickens noted many changes for the better that had come over the scene, making obsolete some of his earlier hostile judgments.

As a final word it may be said that "once a reader of Dickens, always a reader of Dickens." Of hardly any other novelist is this quite so true. The charm of his fantastic characters and his amazing sense of humour, to say nothing of his infinite variety, never grow stale. *Pickwick* and *Copperfield*, for example, may be re-read indefinitely. In the face of such a fact it matters little what estimate critics make of Charles Dickens's work.

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## BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD (1804-1881)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XI.

The Earl of Beaconsfield, one of Queen Victoria's great Prime Ministers, has overshadowed in later years Benjamin Disraeli the novelist. As a young man, however, Disraeli set out upon a literary career, showing at first no special interest in politics. His father was himself a literary man, who explored the by-ways of authorship, and Disraeli the younger, had the run of a various and curiously assorted library.

His early novels are pictures of fashionable life with a Byronic hero, who, as in *Contarini Fleming* (1832), expects to achieve through literature "the amelioration of his kind." It was not until after the political agitation, centring around the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832, had brought contemporary social problems into the forefront of men's minds that Disraeli turned to the political and social novel. \*\* *Coningsby, or The New Generation*<sup>1</sup> (1844) and \*\* *Sybil, or The Two Nations* are the first working out of the theories of the "Young England" party, Disraeli's own brand of Tory politics. This is not the place to discuss the merits of Disraeli's politics, or to argue whether he was a great

<sup>1</sup> For a burlesque of *Coningsby* see Thackeray's *Codlingsby*.

statesman or only a great melodramatist. These questions are still veiled by the confused smoke of party politics. It is sufficient to say that Disraeli desired to obtain a true emancipation of the people under the inspired leadership of an enlightened aristocracy and a revived Church of England, and "the two nations"—that is, the labouring classes and the middle and capitalistic classes—thus fused into one nation with a common ideal of patriotism. It was a plan that he succeeded in making appeal, through the dramatic way in which always he presented it<sup>1</sup>, to the aroused imagination of England, and it was the plan which in the end made him Prime Minister. These two novels, together with \* *Tancred*, *The New Crusade* (1847) have a present-day importance for others than students of social changes. They are proclamations of what turned out to be a constitutional revolution. These three novels compose a trilogy in exposition of the programme of young England.

Some of the characters in these novels are contemporary personages, either favourably or unfavourably set forth, according to Disraeli's own opinions or prejudices, and they are accompanied by a striking assemblage of fictitious figures. In style, Disraeli is self-consciously ornate, and he is often florid as well as Oriental in colour and figures of speech, elements that in his case, add to the interest of the reader, for here the style is most definitely the man.

As his great political life drew to a close, Disraeli wrote two more novels \* *Lothair* (1870) and \*\*\* *Endymion* (1880), in which the political passages are the fruits of his experience, for this reason holding a fascination for the modern reader. He has still the gift of appealing to the imagination. Among the characters appear many portraits of his contemporaries, "idealized" Disraeli said, notably of Wellington, Peel, Gladstone, Cardinal

<sup>1</sup> Compare his challenge "Have you seen Manchester?"—i.e., observed the social effects of industrialism.



Manning, Thackeray and Dickens. In *Endymion* Disraeli appears in a self-portrait under the name of Mr. St. Barbe.

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#### CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819-1875)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XI.

Charles Kingsley is fortunate in to-day possessing three groups of readers, those who are interested in his novels written in behalf of social reform, those who like the vigour of his historical romances, and a band of children to whom *The Water Babies* and *Madam How and Lady Why?* are sources of endless pleasure and instruction.

Kingsley, as a social reformer, was a disciple in part of Carlyle, more definitely of F. D. Maurice, the Christian Socialist, who was criticized as a heretic alike by Christians and by Socialists. To Kingsley, as to many others, the abuses that followed in the train of unregulated industrialism, when governments were dominated by the economic policy of "laissez-faire" and slum and sweat-shop spread filth and disease through the rapidly growing cities, demanded the sympathy and practical thought of all men of responsible position, whether in or out of government or politics. One might define Kingsley's point of view by stating that, as a teacher of the word of God and an educated Christian gentleman, he regarded himself as occupying an extremely re-



sponsible position—one calling both for action and words that should be the cause of action in others.

His two novels of social reform were *Yeast* (1851)<sup>1</sup> and *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet* (1850). Kingsley was a practical idealist, believing first of all in sanitary reform as the most important step in ameliorating the condition of the poor, in teaching the facts concerning the life of the poor labourers to the responsible classes, and to pointing out that all remedies were to be found in a sincere Christianity. In spite of the looseness of structure of these novels, they hold the interest of the reader for their facts of contemporary life and for the passionate fervour of the author's sincerity.

Of the historical novels popularity is fairly evenly divided between \*\*\* *Hypatia, or New Foes with an Old Face* (1853) and \*\* *Westward Ho!* (1855) with \* *Hereward the Wake* (1866) a distinct third. The pictures of Alexandria during the downfall of the Western Empire, the character of Hypatia herself, and the vigour with which the story is told probably place *Hypatia* first. Its theme, that without faith wisdom is of no avail, is typical of Kingsley who regarded the novelist as primarily a teacher, the artist being secondary.

*Westward Ho!* is laid in the time of Elizabeth, a stirring patriotic tale of Amyas Leigh and the men of Devonshire and their adventures ashore and afloat. The Spanish Armada and its destruction have been realities rather than a chapter in history ever since this novel was published.

*Hereward the Wake* has its scene laid in the fen country about Ely before and during the Norman Conquest. The descriptions, particularly in the earlier portions, have all of Kingsley's skill in this art, but the book as a whole has missed the popularity of the other two.

A final word must be said of the children's books, the well-

<sup>1</sup> First appeared in Fraser's Magazine in 1848.

known *The Water Babies* (1863), and the less well-known, in America at least, *Madam How and Lady Why?* (1869). Countless children have had their interest in nature aroused and their powers of observation sharpened by reading these books, which teach in the most delightful of all ways, by interesting and fascinating the young readers.

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GEORGE ELIOT [Mary Ann Cross, born Evans]  
(1819-1880)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XI.

George Eliot had been a translator, writer of essays, and contributor to magazines for several years before she discovered herself to be an artist. The discovery came, it is needless to say, when she began her career as a novelist with the publication in *Blackwood's Magazine* during 1857 of *Amos Barton*, the first story in \* *Scenes of Clerical Life*. The three stories included in this volume attracted immediate attention and favourable comment from contemporary novelists.

George Eliot is sometimes referred to as the originator of the psychological novel. If to be a psychological novelist is to be interested in characters and their motives and in the human problems of moral responsibilities, then the term fits her. In her own mind it is more likely that her interest in human nature did not wear any particular label. Purpose she had, namely, the inculcation of a newer, freer morality, devoid of creed or dogma, but a morality as inescapable as Calvinistic predestination. Adam Bede has stated it: "it isn't notions sets people



doing the right thing—it's feeling." In other words, morality is an inner spirit in man, and not a universal formula.

This moral purpose of George Eliot naturally conditions her novel, for her object is to show that we can reach the truth only through a struggle, that is, by passing through the experiences of life. Man tempers his own spirit; it is not done for him. His deeds, therefore, are the measure of man's spiritual strength; good intentions alone cannot excuse him. The weakness of a kindly soul may be terrifyingly tragic in its effects.

Her purpose to pry into men's souls in order to test the worth of their deeds was accompanied by the imaginative insight of the great artist. It is, of course, one thing to try to analyze character, and another to succeed. She succeeded so well that her power has been likened by some critics to that of Shakespeare, beyond which praise of ability to know men's motives cannot go. Her characterizations, moreover, were based firmly upon her own experience and knowledge of life.

This power is seen at its full development for the first time in \*\*\* *Adam Bede* (1859).<sup>1</sup> The story simple in outline and founded upon a commonplace event, the confession of a girl that she has murdered her child, proceeds, although with characters from humble life, with the universal significance of a Greek tragedy.<sup>2</sup>

It is not an easy task to enumerate the elements of her power, for the whole is that compound genius that defies precise definition. In addition, however, to her ability to create characters, is her skill in making visible in their true colours her backgrounds, thus rounding out and completing her pictures of life. She is, moreover, both witty and wise, filling her novels with striking

<sup>1</sup> The year 1859 is the *annus mirabilis* of the 19th century. In this year also were published Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, and in France, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.

<sup>2</sup> Compare with Scott's *Heart of Mid-Lothian*.



truths more permanent in value than merely clever epigrams, for they are fragments of universal wisdom.

Her next novel \*\* *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), another picture of provincial life, contains a good deal from her own early experiences when she lived on an estate in Warwickshire. Maggie Tulliver, the misunderstood heroine, is one of George Eliot's great portraits. The story is centred about Maggie's refusal to secure happiness at the expense of recognized social convention. Maggie's youth is more interesting than her maturity. The story has a tragic ending, and the realism of the whole novel is portrayed without compromise.

\*\* *Silas Marner* (1861) is a short novel of great technical excellence in structure and characterization, but a book that has not the appeal to all classes of readers that the two first have. It is the story of a man who has suffered unjustly, but who is won back to the world again through his love for a little child. The themes are typically those of George Eliot, love and the redeeming power of self-sacrifice. It is, therefore, a good example for the approach to a knowledge of her world.

\*\*\* *Romola* (1863), her important historical novel, was the result of a visit to Italy. The scene is laid in Florence in the time of the statesman Machiavelli and of Savonarola, who is a dominating figure in her story. It is unlike some of the earlier historical novels in that George Eliot's power of characterization is used with the same skill as in her pictures of English provincial life; thus the novel has a vividness and illusion of reality not found even in Scott. Further, in delineating the character and spiritual struggle of Romola herself, George Eliot reaches her greatest height as an artist. She said of the work: "I began *Romola* a young woman—I finished it an old woman."<sup>1</sup> The emphasis of the book is upon the moral degradation of Tito.

The modern reader will probably not be interested much in

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, vol. II, p. 83.

*Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), a brief, melodramatic story, and George Eliot's first incursion into political questions. Her radicalism is not very radical, for her remedy, if it may be called that, is to urge the working-classes to think and act for themselves.

\* *Middlemarch, a Study of Provincial Life* (1871-2) is a lengthier return to her earlier manner, a firmly constructed story of a woman, Dorothea, who has made an unfortunate marriage and is enmeshed in the consequent spiritual struggle. The background and secondary plot are handled with her usual skill, but the psychology of her characters now overshadows the pictures of manners.

Again her power of characterization saves \* *Daniel Deronda* (1876) from threatened failure because of a not entirely convincing plot. The story of Gwendolyn's redemption by the young Jew, Daniel Deronda, is considered by some critics the climax of her study of character. This completes the list of her great prose fictions. But besides the novels, there are essays, some poetry, notably *The Spanish Gypsy*, and a satire *The Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879). This last book is a series of character sketches written for the purpose of illustrating her theories of social and political conditions in the England of her day.

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#### CHARLOTTE BRONTË (1816-1855)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XII.

Charlotte Brontë (pseud. Currer Bell), one of the large family of a poor parson who held a living in the remote Yorkshire



village of Haworth, led a life of restrictions and self-sacrifice imposed by poverty, from which and from her environment she strove to escape by teaching, by becoming a governess in a private family, and by studying at Brussels in order further to fit herself to teach. She returned to Brussels after a short absence to spend another year there as a teacher, finally to return to Haworth, where at last she found the way of escape for which she had been seeking. This way led through her imagination, and her novels were the result of her struggle.

It is not easy to predict the effect of Charlotte Brontë's novels upon any given reader. So much depends upon becoming interested in the personality striving for self-expression, for these books are the revelation of a soul rather than fiction in the ordinary sense. Probably the best approach is to read first Mrs. Gaskell's \*\* *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Without understanding something about the author, the reader will not always be sympathetic. Behind the mechanism of her plots is the psychology of a passionate, repressed woman.

\*\* *Jane Eyre* (1847) is the novel by which she should be judged. It is proof, if proof be needed, that one source of art may be found in deep, sincere emotion; that mental experiences which have profoundly affected the author, will have, if sincerely set down, almost an equal effect upon the reader. The story is of a woman's love thwarted by a barrier, at first unknown by her, the fact that her lover, Mr. Rochester, is already married. That Mr. Rochester is ready to face bigamy in order to marry Jane seems to-day a curious trait in a character whom the reader is supposed to look upon favourably, and his subsequent blindness and the fact that he is finally free to give the story a "happy" ending are incidents somewhat mechanical. But it is the true emotion with which the story of Jane's love is told that makes the story hold the reader.

\* *Shirley* (1849), her second novel, is again the story of a



woman's love. The book is less read to-day than *Jane Eyre*, but is hardly inferior in literary merit.

\* *Villette* (1853) is based partly upon Charlotte's reminiscences of Brussels, a remarkable book full of truly depicted characters and in its ending reaches a very deep pathos.

### EMILY BRONTË (1818-1848)

Emily (pseud. Ellis Bell), Charlotte's sister, has left a novel \* *Wuthering Heights* (1847) that has been described as one of the most terrifying pieces of fiction, in its effect upon the reader, in all English literature. It is, as few long novels can be, entirely a projection of the author's imagination. Emily has made a world of her own, one of horror, unreality, of frightful events, and yet, so vividly does she see it all that it has a seeming reality—not that of life as we know it, but derived from the power and consistency of her imagination. Again, this novel is a document in psychology. In this fact lies the peculiar interest and fascination of the reader in the novels of the two Brontës. They are read for what they reveal, consciously and unconsciously, of themselves, and not for the incidents of their stories.

### ANNE BRÖNTE (1820-1849). [Pseud. Acton Bell]

Anne was the author of two novels, lesser works both of them than the writings of her sisters, *Agnes Grey*, a record of Anne's experiences as a governess, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. These novels are not likely to be read by any except the chosen few who become Brontë enthusiasts and wish to include in their enthusiasm all three sisters.

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## SIR EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON (1803-1873)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XIII.

Bulwer-Lytton was a prolific and popular novelist of his day with a great variety of theme and purpose. His popularity has now narrowed down to two or three titles, and the others, various in subject as they are, may be characterized by the word "tushery," which Robert Louis Stevenson coined as a generic term for the high-horsed heroes of pseudo-romance. It would not be fair, however, to dismiss Bulwer-Lytton with a word. Here is a man whose first novel appeared in 1828 and his last in 1873, the year of his death, who all that time kept his public and successfully followed the wide differences of popular taste that occurred during this long period. Further, he contributed to the stage more than one play which was a temporary "classic" in the repertory of the Victorian theatre.

From a modern viewpoint, the Byronic hero, languishing against a Mayfair fireplace, uttering the sentimental wisdom of Rousseau and passing through a sombre soul-tragedy of being misunderstood by an insensitive and intellectually inferior age, seems nothing less than a conceited prig and an intolerable snob. One is inclined to regard such heroes as identifiable with the author himself, or at least to represent his ideal of a gentleman. This is what one feels when reading to-day \*\* *Pelham, or The Adventures of a Gentleman* (1828). Pelham, although derived from the "I-have-not-loved-the-world-nor-the-world-me" Byronic hero, is original, for he is a constructive hero (to use a bad modern adjective). He has ideals and aspirations for the



world which he wishes to realize through a political career. In short Pelham, unlike his Byronic prototype, does not turn his back to the world in despair at its hopelessness, but endeavours to do something. It is not an exaggeration to say that Pelham set a new fashion among gentlemen who often dine out. The quiet, dark evening clothes of Pelham did away with the bright hues still lingering on from the gorgeousness of eighteenth century dress; his stiff collar succeeded the Byronic open throat; and his hair was neatly brushed, symbolizing, possibly, the new efficiency of the scholar-idealist.

Perhaps the success of Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* drew Bulwer-Lytton's attention to the novel of crime, or more likely, the general success that several writers were having with this type of fiction. At any rate, after some efforts in this field (there is also a murderer in *Pelham*) he produced \* *Paul Clifford* (1830). This is one of the first novels of humanitarian purpose, having as object, says the author, "to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions, viz:—a vicious prison discipline and a sanguinary penal code." Clifford is a chivalrous highwayman, a type, of course, as old as Robin Hood, and as unlikely in real life, in spite of the host of testimony to the Dick Turpins and all the rest. \* *Eugene Aram* (1832) followed, the story of a philosophizing schoolmaster and murderer. This novel was written at Godwin's suggestion. These novels, with their sentimentalizing of crime, justifiably irritated Thackeray.<sup>1</sup>

Bulwer-Lytton next entered the field of the historical novel, where, as far as the modern reader is concerned, he was more successful. \*\*\* *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) does re-create in the imagination of the reader the horrors of the eruption of Vesuvius that destroyed the city, and the incidents of life in a Roman town in the earlier portions of the story are vivid and seem true. The characters are not historical.

<sup>1</sup> See Thackeray's burlesque *George de Barnwell* and his realistic *Catherine*.



Three others of his historical novels may be read with pleasure and profit, \* *Rienzi* (1835), \*\* *The Last of the Barons* (1843), and \* *Harold* (1848). The latter, *Harold*, although melodramatic in treatment (as is inevitable with Bulwer-Lytton) is, nevertheless, an absorbing story of the Norman Conquest, the tale being unfolded in terms of a dramatic conflict between the personalities of Harold and William. From the time of Harold's departure from England until the fatal ending for this last Saxon king on the battlefield of Senlac (Hastings), Bulwer-Lytton follows all the incidents depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry. It is worthy of note that Lord Tennyson thought well enough of this novel to express his indebtedness to it in a foreword to his drama *Harold*.

As a historical novelist, on the other hand, Bulwer-Lytton is, of course, inferior to Sir Walter Scott, chiefly because Lytton's diction is turgid and high-flown; in addition his tendency toward melodrama is another element of lesser greatness. Critics are agreed in selecting *The Last of the Barons* for the example of the best of his work in this kind. The hero is Warwick, the king-maker.

From the historical novel Bulwer-Lytton attempted realism, or what he considered, with his exaggeration and sentimentalism, to be realism. *The Caxtons* (1849), no longer read, was the first of these essays in a new field, *My Novel* (1853), now sometimes read, the second. His own pose, conscious or unconscious, of the scholarly aristocrat condescending to men of lesser clay was fatal to any form of realism. He could not get over feeling that he was a lord of the manor being kind to his tenantry.

One more novel is left that is often read to-day, particularly by readers interested in the ideal commonwealths of fiction: this novel is *The Coming Race* (1871). Vril, the irresistible force governing his ideal republic in the interior of the earth, seems like an anticipation of one of Mr. H. G. Wells's ideas. The name of the force, it might be noted in passing, is part of the trade

name of a famous beef-extract, a fact that indicates, at least, the wide popularity of this book. The narrative is put in the mouth of an American.

(For his plays, see *The Drama of the Nineteenth Century*).

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### ANTHONY TROLLOPE (1815-1882)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XIII.

The present age has in a measure rediscovered Trollope. Possibly the too frank and perhaps not entirely accurate confession of his autobiography concerning the mechanical methods by which he turned out his novels, writing so many words every quarter of an hour, was to blame for his being temporarily passed by. Certain it is that the two generations after him did not read him much, although he was usually mentioned with respect. Then time wrought its usual miracle and things Victorian were suddenly proclaimed "quaint," instead of "ugly," the adjective of the preceding generation, so that readers turned again to some of the lesser figures among the Victorian novelists in search of the quaintness, and found, probably to their surprise, that Trollope is excellent and delightful reading.

Trollope's imagination is of the kind that visualizes in minute detail persons and their surroundings. He hears accurately the tones of their voices and knows their mannerisms and tricks of speech. It happens, therefore, that however mechanical his physical method of writing may have been, his imagination worked with such visions as are close to those of genius. His characters live and his novels are remembered for the persons in them.



Possibly another quality in Trollope's novels that worked against his popularity a short time back is the fact that he is not an aggressive democrat. His realism, accurate as it is, is confined to portraying the professional cathedral clergy, the upper middle-classes, and the fox-hunting gentry. Realism had become so dominated by political economy and various theories of government that it seemed the only people worth writing about were the lower classes. It was almost *lèse-majesté* to Emperor Demos to take an interest in Trollope's cathedral town and country life. He had, in short, no axes, political or economic, to grind, but wrote about people whose politics were confined to the problems of promotion within a cathedral hierarchy, or to sound Tory principles not to be questioned.

The two best novels for the approach to Trollope are \*\* *The Warden* (1855) and its successor in the Barsetshire series \*\*\* *Barsetshire Towers* (1857). There are no heroes and heroines, but ordinary, recognizable specimens of human nature, who, like all of us, find our petty affairs of the same absorbing fascination as a statesman may find in the problem of managing an empire. The real proof of Trollope's skill is that the reader, while remaining aware that there is in this world such a quality as a sense of humour, contrives nevertheless to take the same fascinated interest in these people and their difficulties. It may be necessary to add a word of warning: if the reader does not enjoy the whims and foibles of human nature, if he holds it his business to lecture or uplift his fellowmen, he will probably be bored by Trollope. Granted only a little human tolerance, the same reader will like him immensely.

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See also, \* *Domestic Manners of the Americans*: Frances Trollope. New ed., with intro., by M. Sadleir. 1927.

## CHARLES READE (1814-1884)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XIII.

Charles Reade was one of the most intense and fervent of the Victorian novelists with a purpose, attacking with vigorous excitement any number of contemporary social abuses and evils, and yet, curiously enough, he is chiefly remembered to-day for his one historical novel \*\* *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861). The explanation appears to be a simple one: this historical narrative is a great novel, while many of the social problems he challenged have been partly solved, or become modified by the passing of time.

*The Cloister and the Hearth* is an amazingly full panorama of medieval life at the dawn of the Renaissance, based upon wide scholarly reading, with this background of learning fused into a series of unforgettable pictures held together by a sustained and absorbing story. The love story of Gerard and Margaret,<sup>1</sup> together with its conflict with ecclesiastical law, holds as much emotion and dramatic suspense as any reader has a right to demand.

The most interesting of his novels of social problems are \* *It is Never Too Late to Mend* (1856), in which the horrors of contemporary prisons are exposed, and \* *Hard Cash* (1863), which is an exposure of insane asylums. The most important of his realistic novels of character is \* *Griffith Gaunt* (1866).

*Charles Reade as I Knew Him*: J. Coleman. 1903.

*The Cloister and the Hearth; Peg Woffington*. Everyman's Library.

<sup>1</sup> Alleged by some writers to be the parents of Erasmus.

## GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XIV.

It is a puzzling matter to advise a general reader about his selections from George Meredith. Should the reader for example become a "Meredithian" during the reading, say of *The Egoist*, he will be always a Meredithian and in need of no further advice at all. On the other hand, if from the outset the reader happens to find the severe intellectual concentration which Meredith's style and thought demand an irritating barrier, he may refuse to submit himself to the process of becoming a Meredithian. He will lose, through a display of impatience, perhaps an opportunity to become familiar with one of the world's most civilized minds. The best advice for the reader of Meredith therefore, is, if he needs it, patience.

A strange fact about Meredith is that in order to understand one group of his novels the reader ought first to master some of his rather difficult poems, notably *The Woods of Westermain*, *Earth and Man*, and *The Thrush in February*. These poems contain Meredith's philosophy, without a knowledge of which, trying to appreciate some of his novels is "to bid a pumpkin caper." And even for extracting the richest meat from *The Egoist*, a study of his essay *On the Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit* (1877) is helpful and advisable.

At this point a reader already may feel restless. "What kind of novelist is this," he asks, "who has to be undertaken as a course in philosophy? I have no inclination to read fiction by chart and compass. I want a book for the chimney-corner." Even this mood will not bar out Meredith, although it will not yield the ultimate satisfaction of the true Meredithian. For this mood, try *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), and the desire to go further will probably follow.

Some indication of what advantages will accrue from going



further the reader has a right to know. The first paragraph of these notes referred to Meredith as a civilized mind. He is an intellectual apostle of civilization—"an inspired prophet of sanity," to borrow Trevelyan's phrase. The reader may feel that his philosophy is here being emphasized at the expense of his abilities as a writer of fiction (since, after all, a novelist should be judged by his novels and not by his theories of the universe), therefore let it be added that as a portrayer of character and dissecting surgeon of men's and women's motives back to their remotest springs of action and as dramatist of true and moving scenes, he is nothing less than a genius. There is no attempt at comparison here, to say this or that novelist is the greatest, for there is no such "greatest." Genius always is unique. One of its signs is its unlikeness to the genius of another writer. "Greatest" is merely a question of individual preference. Meredith is a genius in his way, as Fielding, Jane Austen, Dickens, and Thackeray are in theirs. A general reader may so prefer one kind of genius to another as to have no patience beyond his preference. For such an attitude there is no help, nor is it necessarily blameworthy.

Philosophy and genius Meredith has, neither of these above criticism, for he is a human being. The philosophy may be mastered by the help of a few clues, which will now be offered, selected principally from his poem *The Woods of Westermain*.

About life, first, we are told that it cannot harm us, if we can master fear. We are put here to live, and it must follow that living is good for us. We master fear when we understand that living is good for us. Only ignorance can make shadows before which we tremble; let the light of truth dissipate these shadows, and we recognize in this illumination the familiar. We are a part of nature, for nature lives too. We are children of Earth, and life is "the struggle to be wise."

In the process of Evolution (a theory which Meredith accepts



without comment, with the further assumption that Evolution and Progress are synonymous) man will advance when he holds in perfect balance blood, brain, and spirit. "Earth that triad is." Blood represents the primary, savage instincts which determine the pattern of our life; our task, however, is not to destroy but to control the animal within us. Brain, of course, is our intellectual capacity, which can hold in check and direct into right channels blood. Spirit, less specifically defined by him, is the ultimate goal toward which we should consciously and fearlessly strive until finally the perfect, civilized man will hold in equal portion and exact equilibrium blood, brain, and spirit. These three "join for true felicity." When not in equal balance

. . . "then expect  
Some one sailing will be wrecked."

Thus like other Victorians, Meredith is an optimist, but not a self-complacent one. His optimism is backed by his whole philosophy, especially by his interpretation of Evolution as meaning progress, by his faith that we may control Evolution by conscious striving, and, finally, by his belief that man is nature's experiment, but an experiment intended to achieve a favourable result. His attitude toward nature is that of a mystic.

At present, according to Meredith, we are not as civilized as we might be, and thus in his novels he shows us how some one sailing comes to be wrecked, Sir Willoughby Patterne, for example, in *The Egoist*, has in him too much of the "brutish antique" (blood) which is the cause of his egoism and wreckage. Sir Austen in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, "wished to be Providence to his son," an attempt to use brain at the expense of blood and spirit. Again, Diana, in *Diana of the Crossways*, is at first a failure of brain and blood combined, a failure, however, which she is in the end able to overcome, having renewed in the face of nature her confidence and her sanity.

There remains to discuss briefly the function of the Comic Spirit. Comedy is "the genius of thoughtful laughter" and it is also "the fountain of sound sense." The Comic Spirit therefore is an ideal spectator, applying to the errors of mankind "a calm, curious eye" able to see with intellectual detachment where and why mankind goes astray.

Some readers resent this attitude of intellectual superiority which Meredith and his alter ego the Comic Spirit assume. Omniscience toward life can be an irritating pose, but the pose is almost wholly justified in Meredith by the depth of his insight into character and motives. In the face of his revelation irritation at the manner should be laid aside.

There is, further, another barrier between Meredith and the general reader, and that is his style. He pays his reader the compliment of assuming that he is prepared to read with unremitting attention a style highly concentrated, epigrammatic, and figurative—at times strangely so. A reader does not dare to "skip" with a volume of Meredith before him, for there is no telling in what paragraph may be found a sentence which is the key to the whole story, or indeed are there many sentences which can be spared at all. Such concentrated thought requires care to follow, and the process, too long continued, may be somewhat exhausting.

Meredith in the twenty-fifth chapter of *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* describes his theory of the novel, and shows himself conscious of the risk he may run with some kinds of readers. He says: "At present, I am aware, an audience impatient for blood and glory scorns the stress I am putting on incidents so minute, a picture so little imposing. An audience will come to whom it will be given to see the elementary machinery at work: who, as it were, from slight hint of the straws, will feel the winds of March when they do not blow. To them nothing will be trivial, seeing that they will have in their eyes the invisible conflict



going on around us, whose features a nod, a smile, a laugh of ours perpetually changes. And they will perceive, moreover, that in real life all hangs together: the train is laid in the lifting of an eyebrow, that bursts upon the field of thousands. They will see the links of things as they pass, and wonder not, as foolish people do now, that this great matter came out of that small one."

The following are the novels of George Meredith that are particularly recommended to the general reader: \*\*\* *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859); \* *Evan Harrington* (1861); \* *Rhoda Fleming* (1865); \*\* *Beauchamp's Career* (1874-5); \*\* *The Egoist* (1879); \*\* *The Tragic Comedians* (1880); \*\* *Diana of the Crossways* (1885).

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#### SAMUEL BUTLER (1835-1902)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. XIV.

Samuel Butler is a strange lonely figure in recent literature. He was a satirist and an original thinker touched by the madness of omniscience, for he believed himself not only a scientist (with some show of reason, in spite of the scoffing of his immediate contemporaries) but a painter, a composer of music, a classical scholar, and a literary critic. He did not hesitate to set men right on such diverse subjects as the explanation of how evolution



works, the truth about heredity, the authorship of Homer's *Odyssey* and the secret of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, while painting pictures, or composing music according to the only true theory—that of Handel. Such a character is interesting wholly apart from his writings.

The range of his satire is seen best in \*\* *Erewhon* (1872), a Utopian country in the interior of New Zealand, a land recalling to the reader some of Lemuel Gulliver's voyages.<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants of Erewhon had once almost been conquered and enslaved by the machines their own skill had evolved, until finally they rose in revolt, conquered their oppressors and abolished machines forever. Machines were no longer tolerated except as curiosities preserved in museums. In this satire on the degrading effect of machines upon life and beauty, Butler is in part, of course, following Carlyle and Ruskin, but his satirical method is his own. In addition to the satire on the machine-age, Butler attacks, by paradox and inversion, conventional morality, education and conventionalized religion. In each case the burden of his complaint is the uncritical way in which we accept our beliefs, without thinking, without analysis, and without testing them by the knowledge which the world has already gained. Thus he makes it a grave crime in *Erewhon* for a person to contract a disease: the point made by inversion is that questions which we judge by the standards of conventional morality are problems for which we could find a solution by the application of scientific knowledge. In like manner, young men in *Erewhon* devote most of their time to the study of "the hypothetical language," while their professors are victims of the "fear-of-giving-themselves-away-disease." The climax of his satire, however, is reached in the "musical banks," which are beautiful buildings visited once a week, where a deposit is made by the visitors, and the matter then dismissed until the time comes around for

<sup>1</sup> See Jonathan Swift, p. 177.

another deposit. The whole trend of his satire is against the deadening effect of institutions. Evolution is the reverse of stagnation, but institutions are concerned with maintaining the status quo. Intelligent thought is always working towards change; accepted beliefs desire no change.

His novel \*\* *The Way of All Flesh* (publ. 1903) has for underlying theme the study of heredity and the relation of parents and children. He writes with an almost savage hatred of the parent who seeks to impose his own morality upon a child. The book is strangely real and at the same time unreal, at once absorbing, profound, and irritating. It unquestionably belongs among the important novels of the nineteenth century.

Finally the general reader will enjoy browsing through the paradoxes and maxims of *The Note-Books* (publ. 1912) and in reading the satiric *Psalm of Montreal* (publ. 1904) which praises pagan morality at the expense of puritan. Only Butler's capacity for anger prevented him from being greater than he is, but he possesses the power of making the reader think, even when the reader is antagonized by Butler's anger. He makes one wonder how foolish one's own thoughts are.

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#### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIV, chap. III.

Robert Louis Stevenson, essayist, short-story writer, novelist, and author of verses for children, is one of the most boyish as



well as the friendliest of writers. In spite of a style which is the result of superb literary technique and thoughtful polish, he does not seem to the reader so much the *littérateur* as he does a friend, talking gaily from a rich and fanciful imagination for his reader's entertainment. As in the essays of Charles Lamb, it is the charm of the personality speaking through the text and not the profundity or novelty of the thought that holds the reader. Stevenson has true things to say in \*\*\* *Aes Triplex*, \*\*\* *An Apology for Idlers*, \*\*\* *El Dorado*, \*\*\* *Pulvis et Umbra*, and in the \*\*\* *Virginibus Puerisque* sequence, yet the most fervent admirer of Stevenson would not claim for these delightful essays, or others of his, that they expressed a new philosophy, or even new ideas. On the other hand, the thoughts, almost truisms indeed, are impressed upon the reader's mind by the enjoyment he derives from the manner of presentation, until he sees the ideas in a new light and lays aside the book feeling refreshed in mind and spirit. It may be better to say the obvious in this way than to invent a new categorical imperative. In short, the general reader may pick up any of these essays, including the groups of travel-sketches \*\*\* *An Inland Voyage* (1878), \*\*\* *Travels with a Donkey* (1879), \*\*\* *The Amateur Emigrant*, or the more miscellaneous critical papers \*\* *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882) and be certain that he has before him several hours of sheer pleasure.

Much the same may be said for the fantastic charm of his short stories. No other writer presents the improbable with so impudently convincing an air of plausibility. His power of make-believe is extraordinarily infectious; it has the naïve, humorous sincerity of a child's play, conscious that it is play, yet more than half believing the game to be reality. Prince Florizel of Bohemia, for example, in \*\*\* *The New Arabian Nights*, is as preposterous a character as one may find in a whole library of fiction, and yet a most entertaining companion. About these



particular short stories the critics are severe, it is true, a fact which does not in the least impair their readability. Of all the Utopias of fiction, Stevenson's Utopia of Romance is one of the most habitable.

In the technique of the short-story, particularly in such tales as \*\*\* *Markheim*, \*\*\* *The Sieur de Malétoit's Door*, \*\*\* *A Lodging for the Night*, \*\*\* *The Merry Men*, and \*\*\* *Will o' the Mill*, Stevenson combines a mastery of structure, equal to the French writers of this kind of fiction, with nervous narrative and whimsical characters, nor has he forgotten to include ideas. In this same group should be included the longer \*\*\* *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), an elaboration of the theme of a dual personality already presented in *Markheim*.

The reading of Stevenson's longer fiction ought really to be preceded by a glance at his essay \*\*\* *A Gossip on Romance*. This essay explains his preferences and theories of story-writing and makes clear his limitations, if not to care at all for realism be a limitation rather than a state of mind.

The three novels \*\*\* *Treasure Island* (1883), \*\*\* *Kidnapped* (1886), and \*\*\* *The Black Arrow* (1888) are usually considered "children's books." It is true they have an imperishable capacity of appealing to the young, but older heads who have not lost all the imagination of youth should find them a source of pleasure. The first two novels have their scenes laid in an indefinite eighteenth century of piratical romance. *The Black Arrow* has for historical background the wars of the Roses.

The two best of the adult novels, if a distinction is to be made between his novels for children and grown ups, are \*\* *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889) and \*\*\* *Weir of Hermiston* (publ. 1896). The novels written in collaboration with his brother-in-law Lloyd Osbourne, such as \* *The Wrecker* (1892) and \* *The Ebb-Tide* (1894) fall only a little short of the other two, but of the whole group *Weir of Hermiston* is his greatest achievement.

His \*\*\* *A Child's Garden of Verses* (1885) has a delicacy and lightness of touch purely Stevensonian, coupled with his instinctive understanding of the mind of a child.

With his friend W. E. Henley Stevenson collaborated in the writing of three plays \* *Deacon Brodie*, \* *Beau Austin*, and *Admiral Guinea* (publ. 1892), of which *Beau Austin* alone had any possibility as a "practical" stage-play. These plays are slender, although they contain a considerable measure of the Stevensonian charm, but they impress the reader as "toy-theatre" dramas. Perhaps the explanation of Stevenson's failure to regard the drama as a serious opportunity for the artist may be found in his attitude as revealed in the essay \*\* *Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured*. Apart from problems of the drama, however, Stevenson was a sound, if not profound, literary critic, able to write of books with the same charm that characterizes all his work.

Last of all, Stevenson, again like Charles Lamb, was a delightful letter writer. His letters are in fact an indispensable part of his literary work and hold the same interest as do his essays.

Supplementary readings: \*\*\* *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882); *Memories and Portraits* (1887); *The Wrong Box* (1889. With Lloyd Osbourne); *Across the Plains* (1892); *In the South Seas* (1896); \*\*\* *Essays in the Art of Writing* (1905).

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## THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928)

Thomas Hardy, the last of the great Victorians, died in the winter of 1928 full of mental vigour until the end, and for the last twenty years he had been writing poetry instead of novels.

With his novels the crown is placed upon the nineteenth century's edifice of fiction—*finis coronat opus*—and the culmination is indeed one worthy of the work that has gone before. From Sir Walter Scott to Thomas Hardy there flows past such a panorama of fiction as no other age or time has yet shown. And unlike other literary epochs there is no decadence here, but instead a rising climax reached in the work of Thomas Hardy to stand as a tradition and an inspiration for the succeeding age.

Thomas Hardy was a mind disillusioned, scornful of the easy optimism of the mid-century, yet with a universal grasp, able to present tragedy in such a way as to exhalt, through pity and terror, the mind of the reader, leaving him in the same mood that held a citizen of Athens the day he first saw and listened to Sophocles's *Ædipus the King*. It is the breadth, the greatness and universality of Hardy's concept of tragedy, that frees him from the often made, and thoughtlessly made, charge of pessimism.

A writer to be rated a pessimist must depress his reader, must leave him feeling that nothing matters, that no prospect pleases since man is wholly vile (if the paraphrase may be permitted), that life is a useless ordeal, and what Bacon calls "the vicissitude of things" so beyond our comprehension as to destroy our faith. Since none of these effects follows the reading of Hardy's stories and poems, the name does not apply. His great tragedies, far from being depressing, so enlarge the reader's view of life as to make his own cares and troubles of less importance than they were, giving to him an indefinable sense of "at-oneness" with the rest of the Universe (to borrow a Nietzschean phrase), a feeling that



is a source, not of despair, but of consolation. And it is this feeling which is the test of great tragedy.

The most important distinction between the philosophy of George Meredith and that of Thomas Hardy lies not in calling Meredith an optimist and Hardy a pessimist, or the one a writer of comedy who is also aware of tragedy, and the other a tragedian sometimes aware of comedy, but this: the philosophy of Meredith looks to the future, a time when there shall be even balance between "blood, brain, and spirit"; and Hardy looks only at the present and its springs in the immediate past. The vision of the future is the more glorious, yet it may not be true however much we should like it to be. Hardy's picture of the present is literal truth, and there are some who do not care to face the truth when they may, like the proverbial ostrich, so easily stick their heads under the sands of romance.

Thomas Hardy believes, like the ancient Greeks, that "character is fate," with the addition that the influence of environment shapes and moulds character, or at other times, that there is a conflict between character and environment. Further, he shows in his novels that trifles may be important factors in shaping our destinies, and often because they are trifles, we do not recognize their significance at the time they come into our lives. There can be no interference with or alteration of our lives by an intervening Providence. We run our own race subject only to the delays and detours forced upon us by unforeseeable chance occurrences. Thus we may not arrive at the goal we set ourselves but somewhere totally and often tragically different. The world has been set spinning and thereafter it has only its own momentum for its speed.

Two of his great tragedies illustrate his method of depicting life, \*\*\* *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and \*\*\* *The Return of the Native* (1895). Tess is the product of her environment—the country—and Eustacia Vye, in the other novel, in conflict with

it. The tragedy of Tess results from her combats with two characters, not of her environment, but equally the products of their own, with one of whom she is disastrously unable to contend. Eustacia Vye's tragedy arises from her desperate and unavailing struggle to escape from her environment. In both novels the unforeseen and the unforeseeable contribute to the catastrophes. The attention of the reader, in each case, is bound up in the fate of the protagonists, and both, the good woman Tess and the self-centred Eustacia, inspire in the reader profound depths of pity and terror.

The environment of Hardy's characters is Wessex, the ancient kingdom of the West Saxons, having Salisbury (his "Caster-bridge") as its centre, thence away to Bournemouth in one direction, from there through the New Forest to Weymouth in Devonshire, including of course the back country of moors and valleys up slightly beyond the northern side of Salisbury Plain, where Stonehenge stands. It is an agricultural and dairy country, lying apart from the greatly altered industrial areas of the Midlands and the north. Here, ancient superstitions and the habits and customs of an older England have lingered on. Urban sophistication makes its intrusion only in the guise of outsiders. Further to preserve the simplicity of his Wessex folk, the time of the novels is often thrown a generation or two back into the past. His backgrounds are filled with pictures of old customs and old trades, now mostly forgotten or passed away even in the remote corners of Wessex. But for all the atmosphere of a not very remote past, the stories themselves are "modern"—that is, contemporary, in treatment.

His women, for example, are neither adventuresses in black satin nor simple innocents in white organdie. Like Meredith, he pays women the compliment of imagining them not only as human beings but as having brains. One has merely to compare the shadowy impalpability of Thackeray's Beatrix in *Henry*



*Esmond*, who is a heartless coquette principally because Thackeray tells us so, with Eustacia Vye, the "raw material of a goddess" whose passions run strong and deep, and whom the reader comes to know as well as if he had himself kept an appointment with her on Egdon Heath, to see the difference between the women of mid-century fiction with those at the end.

In structure Thomas Hardy's novels are simple, almost austere, uncomplicated by minor plots and digressions. The plots are built firmly and strongly, differing from the structure of Greek tragedy only in the width and extent of the background, and in the massing of attendant details. The tragedies occur against a panorama of real life, filled with the coming and going of many figures, who touch, now and then, the lives of the protagonists, or pass by unknowing and unknown.

Hardy the poet has for some strange reason not the equal fame of Hardy the novelist. Yet no admirer of Hardy can afford to neglect his poetry, whether of nature or of briefer tragic tales in verse form. Last of all there is the Thomas Hardy of \*\* *The Dynasts*, a drama, in many acts and scenes, of the Napoleonic wars. It is an attempt at interpretation of the powers or forces behind the struggle done on a canvas of heroic size, a dramatic epic unique in power and grandeur in English literature.

Other novels and stories suggested for reading follow: \*\* *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; \* *Jude the Obscure* (the most sombre of his tragedies); \* *Under the Greenwood Tree*; \*\* *Far from the Madding Crowd*; \*\* *Wessex Tales* (a collection of short stories).

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## Lesser Novelists of the Nineteenth Century First Half of the Century

The popularity of the novel in the nineteenth century was the cause of a vast output of fiction. Not only did the success of Sir Walter Scott bring in a host of imitators and followers in historical fiction, but the realistic studies of everyday life were likewise not neglected. Furthermore, the so-called "Gothic Romance," that is to say, stories of the supernatural or of strange unearthly happenings, lingered on, in part because of the similar tendencies of German romance, at this time very popular in England and America.

The greater part of this fiction has passed into oblivion, and of that which has been spared by the intercession of critics the general reader may not hope to read all items, if he is to have time left for other fields. The novels listed in the following paragraphs, however, have been selected, arbitrarily perhaps, as having matter in them capable of interesting or entertaining the modern student. For a specialist desirous of investigating the literary or social backgrounds of the age, the list should be extended.

**\*\* *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818),** by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley is undoubtedly an excellent example of the tales of terror belonging to the continuation of the influence of Gothic romance, but superior in plausibility, scientific basis, and philosophical depth to the usual specimen of its genre. Its theme, the creation in a laboratory of a living monster by the scientist Frankenstein and the horror of this machine-made living creature without a soul, have added a phrase to our language—"Frankenstein's monster."

The author was the second wife of Shelley and the daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the first advocates for equal rights for women. The story was written while she and her husband were with Byron in Switzerland.

John Galt (1779-1839) in \* *The Annals of the Parish* (1821) has written a delightful novel of realistic and minute studies of rural life in Scotland. The annals are recorded by an innocent minded old clergyman as a record of the joys and sorrows of his flock.

William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882) is a readable historical novelist, for he had a vigorous imagination, an eye for the picturesque in history, and conveyed the impression that he wrote with the keenest enjoyment. In character delineation he was far superior to G. P. R. James (1799-1860) another historical novelist of great popularity in his day, but now remembered chiefly through Thackeray's burlesque of him.<sup>1</sup>

At least four of Ainsworth's tales may be read to-day, not only for the stories they contain, but also for their vivid pictures of historical events. These are \* *Jack Sheppard* (1839), which recounts the career of the famous criminal and highwayman and his escape from the Old Bailey; \*\* *The Tower of London* (1840), which is a story of Lady Jane Grey's conspiracy and execution and of the legends and traditions associated with this national fortress and prison; \*\* *Old Saint Paul's: A Tale of the Plague and the Fire* (1841), the title of which is sufficiently descriptive of the contents; and \* *The South Sea Bubble: A Tale of the Year 1720* (1868), which is a dramatic account of the frenzy for speculation in companies formed for exploring for the supposed riches to be found in the islands of the South Seas. See also a not bad romance, *The Admirable Crichton*, Everyman's Library.

G. P. R. James's historical novels were written in an incredibly pompous style, without a trace of a sense of humour, but were founded on a general fidelity to the facts of the historical, as distinct from, the invented incidents. Either *Richelieu: A Tale*

<sup>1</sup> See *Barbazure* in Thackeray's *Novels by Eminent Hands*, in which are satirized James's openings with "two lone horsemen," his excessive use of obsolete technical terms, and the wild extravagance of his language.



of *France* (1829), or *Agnes Sorel* (1853), would be a fair sample of his work.

See also, *The Solitary Horseman, or The Life and Adventures of G. P. R. James*: S. M. Ellis, 1927.

One other historical novel deserves mention, \* *The Household of Sir Thomas More* (1851) by Anne Manning (1807-1879).

The victories of Nelson in the Napoleonic wars were in part responsible for the popularity of tales of the sea. Nautical melodramas, such as *Black Eyed Susan*, were greatly applauded on the stage, while one of the natural aspects of English patriotism has been ever a love of the exploits and adventures of British tars.

Captain Frederick Marryat,<sup>1</sup> who served for twenty-four years in the English navy, carried on the tradition of the sea-adventure and the naval story begun by Defoe and Smollett. He had a special skill in portraying the odd characters of the old sailing ships under Lord Nelson and for stirring incidents. His novels, while excellent reading for boys, may be read with equal enjoyment by their fathers. They are rich in humour and in knowledge of human nature. Especially to be recommended are \*\* *Peter Simple* (1834), \*\*\* *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836), and \* *Jacob Faithful* (1834).

Frederick Chamier's *Tom Bowling: A Tale of the Sea* (1841) is also a safe experiment for those who like Marryat's novels.

For a parallel to these adventures of the sea \*\* *Charles O'Malley* <sup>2</sup> by Charles Lever (1806-1872) is an excellent military yarn. The Irish characters are, perhaps, in the tradition of the melodramatic stage, but amusing none the less. The incidents range from the early scenes at Trinity College, Dublin, to life in Galway, and the military adventures are of the Peninsular War.

<sup>1</sup> Florence Marryat: *Life and Letters of Captain Marryat*. 1872.

<sup>2</sup> For a burlesque of *Charles O'Malley*, see Thackeray's *Phil Fogarty of the Fighting Onety Onth*.



MARY RUSSELL MITFORD (1787-1855)

**\*\*** *Our Village: Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery* (1824-1832)<sup>1</sup> is a work in which it is a constant delight to dip. It is not a novel in the usual sense of this term, but is literally, as stated in the title, a series of sketches, the whole reading to a length that compels "tasting," to follow Bacon's advice. The village was near Reading in the Thames Valley where Miss Mitford lived for the last twenty years of her life. She is a Jane Austen in her powers of shrewd, humorous observation, and in her capacity to make her small and insignificant world interesting, but she lacks, of course, the genius and the constructive power of Miss Austen. Her sketches, however, have the fascination of accurate pictures of real life, seen by an observer who knows how to choose, how to portray, and what to emphasize.

Her earlier literary friendships included most of her contemporaries down to, and including, Ruskin. In 1852, under the title of *Recollections of a Literary Life* she published passages from her contemporaries accompanied by her own comments, while all her life she corresponded in gossipy, often critical letters with her friends.<sup>2</sup>

## LESSER NOVELISTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

## A SUGGESTED LIST

## LATTER HALF OF THE CENTURY

Grant Allen (1848-1899). *The Woman Who Did* (1895).

A plea for a freer union between the sexes that fluttered the doves of its day

Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825-1900). **\*\*\*** *Lorna Doone* (1869).

Exmoor during Monmouth's rebellion. Historical portion a background for the romance of adventure.

Sir Walter Besant (1836-1901). *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* (1882).

An optimistic study in realism.

George Borrow (1803-1881). **\*\*** *Lavengro* (1851).

A story of the Gypsies.

William Wilkie Collins (1824-1889). *The Woman in White* (1860). *The Moonstone* (1868).

<sup>1</sup> Begun in *The Lady's Magazine* in 1819.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Letters*, first and second series, ed. A. G. L'Estrange and H. Charters, 1870-72.

Novels of crime and the disentanglement of complicated clues. No professional detectives.

Pearl M. Y. Craigie, pseud. John Oliver Hobbes (1867-1906). *Some Emotions and a Moral* (1891).

Intellectual study of Society.

Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909). *Mr. Isaacs* (1882).

A tale of modern India.

Samuel Rutherford Crockett (1860-1914). *The Stickit Minister* (1893).

Scottish humour and character.

Louise de la Ramée, pseud. Ouida (1839-1908). *Under Two Flags* (1867).

Good melodrama about a pure souled vivandière.

George Du Maurier (1834-1896). \*\* *Peter Ibbetson* (1892).

Occultation of dreams, with a melodramatic but interesting story.

\*\*\* *Trilby* (1894).

The sentimental glorification of the artist's model in the *Quartier Latin*

Unforgettable characters, Svengali, Little Billee, the Laird.

George Gissing (1857-1903). *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903).

A curious intimate journal in essay-like form. More representative of Gissing's best work than are his pessimistic, realistic novels.

Henry Harland (1861-1905). *The Cardinal's Snuff-Box* (1900).

Witty stories of sentimentalized sophistication.

William Henry Hudson (1862-1922). *Green Mansions*.

A romance of the tropical forest of South America.

Edward Maitland (1824-1897). *By and By* (1873).

"A historical romance of the future."

William De Morgan (1839-1917). \* *Joseph Vance* (1906). \*\* *Alice-for-Short* (1907).

Dinah Maria Mulock, afterwards Craik (1826-1887). \* *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856). New ed., 1914.

Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897). <sup>1</sup> *Miss Marjoribanks* (1866). <sup>2</sup> *Salem Chapel* (1863).

<sup>1</sup> A humorous portrait of a social climber. <sup>2</sup> The dissenting chapel from within.

William Clark Russell (1844-1911). *The Romance of a Midshipman* (1898)

A good story for boys.

Joseph Henry Shorthouse (1834-1903). \* *John Inglesant* (1880).

Scene during the Civil War in England, and at Rome. Original in conception and treatment.

Henrietta E. V. Stannard, pseud. John Strange Winter (1856-1911). \* *Bootles' Baby* (1885).

Meadows Taylor (1808-1876). \*\* *Confessions of a Thug* (1839). New ed. in World's Classics series. A striking picture of India.

John Watson, pseud. Ian Maclaren (1850-1907). *Beside the Bonny Brier Bush* (1894). Scottish characters, Scottish humour, and a measure of sentimentality.

Amusing.

William Hale White, pseud. Mark Rutherford (d. 1914). *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* (1881). *The Revolution in Tanners Lane* (1887).

Both these novels are autobiographical—theme, the dissent of a dissenter against Dissent.

Walter Theodore Watts-Dunton (1836-1914). *Aylwin* (1898)

Gypsies, Snowdonia, and rosicrucians.



Mrs. Henry Wood (1814-1887). \* *East Lynne* (1861).

One of the best of the thrillingly melodramatic and pathetic novels.

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900). *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891).

An interesting novel that now seems curiously old-fashioned.

## Essayists

### WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778-1830)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. VII.

The life of William Hazlitt has nothing to offer the lover of romance. He spent a few boyhood months with his father in Massachusetts, returned to England and dabbled a while at portrait painting, and finally settled down in London as lecturer, critic, and essayist, content with the uneventful life of a writer (although he never lost his early acquired love of art and of outdoors). But during that uneventful life he made the acquaintance of all the contemporary geniuses, and retained throughout his days the intimate friendship of Charles Lamb. This, after all, is not a bad sum total for an existence.

The range of Hazlitt's literary criticism is extraordinary, paralleled of course, by the scope of his reading. The world's great classics had all fallen under his eye, not the scholar's, but the eye of the omnivorous general reader. And this reading formed his literary style, which is so good that Robert Louis Stevenson wisely said of it "none of us can write like Hazlitt." Further, as a literary critic there are few of his judgments with which the critical world of to-day disagrees.

Of his literary criticism, the general reader will best begin with the \*\*\* *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (1817). The student on the threshold of his reading of Shakespeare will find that on the side of literary appreciation these essays are as valuable to-day as when they were written. They are excellent brief guides to the extraction of a full enjoyment.

The pictures of his contemporaries in \*\* *The Spirit of the Age* (frequent references to which has been made in the bibliographies



in this section) will please the reader who likes the fearless judgment of one who has had personal contact with those about whom he writes. Here again his verdicts are enduring: he admired Coleridge, Cobbett for his *Rural Rides*, Scott, "the greatest and wisest" of the novelists, and Wordsworth.

The theatre-lover will turn to his \*\* *A Review of the English Stage* for his personal impressions of the great actors, the Kembles, Kean, Macready, and Mrs. Siddons. Theatre-going was for him an intimate pleasure. Unlike some modern critics, the task of dramatic criticism did not bore him, therefore he writes of the theatre with an infectious enthusiasm which results in making his descriptions of acting the best and most vivid that we possess.

In like manner the art student will find his essays on the painters full of matter, particularly in his interpretations of the artist's purpose. He antedated Ruskin in his comment upon Turner's "knowledge of the effects of air." As an art critic his merit lies in the soundness of his taste and in his capacity for making his readers "see" what he is writing about.

There remains to mention the most delightful side of Hazlitt—the miscellaneous, personal essayist. \*\*\* *My First Acquaintance with Poets* has been called the best essay in the language. Certainly for charm of style, as well as for the intimate pictures it gives of Coleridge and Wordsworth, this essay is not equalled. Next only to this are \*\* *On Going a Journey*, \*\* *On The Feeling of Immortality in Youth*, \*\* *On Reading Old Books*, \* *On Reading New Books*, \* *Of Persons One Would Wish to have Seen*, \*\*\* *On Shakespeare*, \*\* *On the Fear of Death*, \* *On Disagreeable People*, \*\*\* *On Taste*, \*\*\* *On Familiar Style*, \*\* *On Poetry in General*, \* *The Sick Chamber*, \* *The Fight*, \*\*\* *Elia*. Any or all of these may be recommended for reading by the study fire on a winter's night, or in a hammock on an August afternoon. The reader feels in a decisive way, when he finishes an essay by Hazlitt, that for a short time he has had contact with a civilized mind.

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*Works*: Ed., W. E. Henley, 1902-4.  
*Characters of Shakespear's Plays*. Everyman's Library.  
*Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (1819). Everyman's Library.  
*The Spirit of the Age, and Lectures on the English Poets* (1818-19). One vol. Everyman's Library.  
*Table Talk* (1821-2). Everyman's Library.  
*Sketches and Essays*. World's Classics series.  
*Selected Essays on English Literature*: Ed. by J. Zeitlin. 1913.  
*Essays on the Poets and Other English Writers*: T. De Quincey.  
*Essays in English Literature, 1780-1860*: G. Saintsbury. 1890.  
*Hours in a Library*: Sir L. Stephen. In vol. II 1892.

## CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. VIII.

The reader of Hazlitt experiences the pleasure of contact with the thought of a civilized man; the reader of Charles Lamb, the pleasure of association with a personality who is witty, humorous, touched with pathos, all qualities expressed with a charm of style and felicity that defy analysis. Lamb shares with Shakespeare the adjective "gentle." It is not an effeminate gentleness in Lamb's nature, but rather the gentleness that comes from wisdom, a wisdom learned from books, yet expanded and mellowed by life and living.

Over this gentle soul hung the shadow of tragedy. His sister, Mary, in one of her recurrent fits of insanity murdered her mother. Charles Lamb devoted his days to taking care of, and watching over, Mary. Their life together was interrupted only whenever it was necessary to take Mary to an asylum until one of her attacks had passed away. His devotion to her is one of the most touching stories in literary history. In her lucid intervals Mary was able to return in equal measure his devotion and to share with him in his reading and writing.

During the years of association with Mary and while he



lived in the literary world, he was tied for thirty-three years to a desk for several hours a day as a clerk in the East India House. Neither the shadow of tragedy nor the irksomeness of a steady routine marred his zest for life. In the late afternoon or evening, he and Mary haunted old book and print shops, visited the shilling galleries of the theatres, or sat at home to entertain the writers and intellectually eminent men who crowded their humble lodgings. Among these eminent men were two particularly close friends, Coleridge and Hazlitt.

Lamb's triumph over life had its source in his character. It was his gentle character, his shrewd, humorous powers of observation, his witty conversation that brought men to his door, and the same qualities are reflected in his writing. The reader of Lamb comes to know him and his life intimately, personally, in a way that is not so true of any other maker of literature. It follows naturally that the reader learns also from Lamb much about living, and about the state of mind most suited (if only it could be imitated!) for facing this ordeal.

In reading of his life it will be found that some biographers refer, with such shakings of the head as may be done on paper, to his over-indulgence in tobacco and alcohol. Sometimes this phase of his character is grossly exaggerated, but at the worst, it has not impaired for us to-day the Lamb who watched over his sister and created the gentle Elia of his essays.

Probably the best introduction to Charles Lamb is to begin with some of the \*\*\* *Essays of Elia*, say with *Old China*, in which he describes through a delicate rose-pink of recollection that is never, with Lamb, sentimentalism, his life with Mary, the Sunday walks into the country and the purchase of books and prints for their precious collection. From this essay, go on to \*\*\* *Mackery End in Hertfordshire* and to the most moving and most charming of all his essays, \*\*\* *Dream Children*.

To sample his humour there are \*\*\* *A Dissertation on Roast*



*Pig* and \*\*\* *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist* to be read. After these the "Elia habit" ought to be well established, so that \*\*\* *The Superannuated Man* will be reached in the natural course of time. But in one's delight over Elia the essay \*\*\* *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago* must not be overlooked. This contains an account of his school-days with Coleridge, with the portrayed characters reversed by Lamb in order to throw over his reminiscences a thin veil of fiction.

Next to his charm as a personal essayist is Lamb's skill as a letter-writer. He is supreme in this now almost extinct art, and indeed carried it to so high a pitch as to be the despair of subsequent letter-writers.

There are yet other sides to Lamb's creative writing. First, there is the lyric \*\*\* *The Old Familiar Faces*, then \* *A Tale of Rosamund Gray* (1798), his poems and stories for children, a tragedy *John Woodvil* and a not very good farce *Mr. H—*, and last, but highly important as a contributing cause in the revival of interest in the contemporaries of Shakespeare, his \* *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*. These are also evidence of his ability as a critic and of his sensitiveness to poetry. This work serves excellently for any one beginning the reading of the Elizabethan dramatists.

Of his writings for children the best known, of course, is \*\* *Tales from Shakespeare*, the major portion of it by Mary. She is the writer of the narratives of the comedies, Charles of some of the tragedies. These tales are the best introduction to Shakespeare that a child can have, for while they make the story of each play clear to the child's mind, they whet at the same time his curiosity to read the play.

A further list of essays: *Oxford in the Vacation*; *My Relations*; *New Year's Eve*; *Imperfect Sympathies*; *The Praise of Chimney Sweepers*; *Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading*; *Sanity of True Genius*; *My First Plays*; *A Chapter on Ears*; *Popular Fallacies*.

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*Mary and Charles Lamb*: W. C. Hazlitt.  
*Lamb*: T. De Quincey. In *Literary Reminiscences*. See De Quincey bibliography.  
*Appreciations*: W. Pater. 1889. "Charles Lamb."

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. IX.

Landor was a prolific and long-lived writer who has left behind an immense mass of prose and verse likely enough, by the sheer quantity of it, to discourage the approach of the modern reader. "Is it possible," one is tempted to ask, "that any one man could produce so much that one has never read?" Further questions might be whether there is much matter of importance here? and, if so, how shall it be found? since it is not reasonable to expect any but a specialist to make a thorough sampling of this quarry.

As far as most of his verse goes, the general reader will probably leave it alone, but even so, he must not neglect \*\*\* *Rose Aylmer*, that short and perfect lyric, or \*\*\* *Dirce*, another gem. On the whole, however, a volume of selections will be sufficient, if it includes the sonnet to Browning.

Almost the same statement may be made about Landor's prose. A reader will wish to dip into the \* *Imaginary Conversations* to see what they are like, and will read more or less of them as his interests and taste may dictate. The range of subject-matter is from ancient Greek to contemporary topics, treated in an elaborate prose style.

Experiments in *Imaginary Conversations* suggested are:



## 300 What to Read in English Literature

Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn; The Empress Catherine and Princess Dashkof; The Maid of Orleans and Agnes Sorel; Steele and Addison; Lucullus and Caesar; Southey and Landor.

The reader is encouraged to try, also, some of the imaginary letters between \* *Pericles and Aspasia* (1836).

*Life*: Sir S. Colvin. English Men of Letters series. 1881.

*Imaginary Conversations*. World's Classics series.

*Pericles and Aspasia*: Ed. by H. Ellis. Camelot series.

*Select Poems*. Canterbury Poets series.

*Studies in Literature, 1789-1877*: E. Dowden.

*Hours in a Library*: Sir L. Stephen. "Landor's Imaginary Conversations." New ed., 1892.

*Studies in English Literature, 1780-1860*: G. Saintsbury, 2nd series.

*Miscellanies*: A. C. Swinburne.

For the work of his brother Robert Landor (1781-1869), see *Selections from Robert Landor*: Ed. by E. Partridge. 1927.

### LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859)

Leigh Hunt is sometimes dismissed by critics as "that facile writer," "the first modern journalist" and other such phrases which imply that the general reader will not find him a person of much interest or importance. As a professional man of letters Hunt was prepared to, and did, write on almost any subject that came to hand, with, of course, the consequence that much of his writing is trivial or has now lost its interest. Possibly the derogatory tone is, however, more applicable to his poetry than to his prose, although there are many to-day who have had \* *Abou ben Adhem* read to them in early youth and treasure a half dreamy memory of its enjoyment. It is, however, true that most of his poetry has deservedly been forgotten, but it is not right to forget that he was one who helped to show Keats the true ascent of Parnassus.

In his prose there are many essays, inferior to those of Lamb and Hazlitt to be sure, that nevertheless have value and charm to-day. Further, his \*\* *Lord Byron, and Some of his Contemporaries* (1828) justly appears in the list of readings suggested in



connection with a study of the poets of the early Nineteenth Century. Among the essays should be read: *Cruelty to Children*; *The Old Gentleman*; *Colour*; *A Cat by the Fire*; *My Books*; *Getting Up on Cold Mornings*; *Fiction and Matter of Fact*; *On the Realities of the Imagination*; *Hats, Ancient and Modern*; *The Waiter*.

For the student of the drama *Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres* (1807; 2nd ed. 1808) is necessary and not dull reading.

*Autobiography.*

*Life*: W. C. Monkhouse. Great Writers series. 1893.

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*Essays and Sketches*. World's Classics series.

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*Selections in Prose and Verse*: Ed. by J. H. Lobban. 1909.

*Dramatic Essays*: Selected and edited by W. Archer and R. W. Lowe.

\*\* *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*. 1828.

*The Spirit of the Age*: W. Hazlitt. 1825. "Mr. T. Moore—Mr. Leigh Hunt."

*Leigh Hunt*: T. B. Macaulay. Rptd. in *Literary Essays*, 1913.

## THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785-1859)

Critical opinion is still divided on the question of De Quincey's final place in English literature. His prose is of the elaborate, ornate school, and he is lacking in the omniscient profundity, deep scholarship, and classical sense of form that make Landor a god in the academic world. On the other hand, the general reader will find De Quincey more interesting and entertaining than the aloof Landor, and this reader will not worry his head at all over the problem of how much fact or how much fiction there is in \*\*\* *The Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. He will find the whole more absorbing than many of the contemporary psychological novels of the "confession" or "stream of consciousness" school, and that by the exercise of his literary magic De Quincey either has made reality into romance or invested romance with a strangely convincing realism, it does not matter which.

The essay that is the test of the general reader's liking for his

style in its most elaborate dress is \*\* *Levana, or Our Ladies of Sorrow*. To some this allegory is a mental irritation; to others, an inspiration. Whatever one's personal taste may be, again the young writer should be warned against any desire to imitate De Quincey's style in this particular essay.

The following essays will give the reader pleasure: \*\* *Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power*; \*\*\* *On Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth*; \*\* *The English Mail Coach*; \*\*\* *Literary Reminiscences* (Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb); \*\* *Joan of Arc*.

In literary criticism it is possible that De Quincey's work will be more enduring than that of his *Confessions*.

*Life*: D. Masson. English Men of Letters series. 1881.

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*Hours in a Library*: Sir L. Stephen. New ed., vol. 1. 1892.

#### LESSER ESSAYISTS

John Wilson [pseud. Christopher North] (1785-1854).

His contributions to Blackwood's under the title of *Noctes Ambrosianæ* make pleasant casual reading-matter.

*Annals of a Publishing House* [i.e., Blackwood's]: Mrs. M. O. W. Oliphant. 1897.

Sydney Smith (1771-1845).

The essays of Sydney Smith, published originally in *The Edinburgh Review* contain a surprising amount of sound sense. Specimens of them may be found in the various collections of nineteenth century essayists.

#### Prose Writers

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (LORD)

(1800-1859)

Lord Macaulay had an encyclopaedic memory and an omniscient mind. He wrote poetry not so well as he wrote essays and reviews, and these not quite so well as he wrote history, but take him for all in all he reigned over a lofty and extensive plateau,



ruling his elevated province in the republic of letters as a dictator who knew all things. Thus in reviewing a book (and book reviews were the cause of some of his most famous essays) Lord Macaulay's way was to write the book in brief himself, to show how it ought to have been done. His well remembered essay on Johnson was such a review of an edition of Boswell's *Johnson*. Lord Macaulay proceeds to tell us what manner of man he would have us think Johnson to have been.

Macaulay was a man of violent prejudices, especially about political questions, and he is therefore not a reliable portrait painter for the likeness of those unfortunate men who, at one time or another in the world's history, did not happen to share Lord Macaulay's political views. Yet so clear and persuasive in his style, so vivid and detailed his pictures, that, as one reads, his prejudices have all the ring of reasoned truth. The picture he drew, for example, of Dr. Johnson has been the popular portrait of this man ever since; his traits of character, those bestowed upon him by Macaulay.

It is this readability of Macaulay, whether he is writing narrative poems, critical essays, or history, that will prevent him from ever losing his place on the library shelves of the general reader. His style, slightly monotonous with the tone of irrevocable judicial decisions, if the truth were spoken of it, is nevertheless a model of lucidity and logical structure.<sup>1</sup> School-masters have admired it so much that they have spent several generations now trying to teach infants to write like Macaulay, but not very much good has come of trying to imitate his example.

Probably no man since Bacon has been so encyclopaedic a reader as Macaulay, and his omnivorous study was combined with an infallible memory. The resulting background gives

<sup>1</sup> The famous remark of Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, on his style should be noted: "The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style!"



amazing substance to what he has to say. He had, moreover, the kind of imagination that can piece facts together to make of them a vivid picture. The scenes in his history are like photographs taken on the spot while the event was in action. There is but one thing to remember when reading Macaulay: facts troublesome to his political theories he ignored. Facts that he does relate may be relied upon, but how much is missing the reader cannot always tell.

Readings in Macaulay: \*\*\* *The Lays of Ancient Rome*. Essays: \*\*\* *Milton*; \*\*\* *Byron*; \*\*\* *History*; \*\*\* *Samuel Johnson*; \*\* *Bunyan*; \*\*\* *Lord Clive*; \*\*\* *Warren Hastings*; \*\*\* *Addison*; *The Review of Leigh Hunt's edition of Wycherley, Congreve, etc. (on the Comedy of the Restoration)*; \*\*\* *Review of the Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay (Fanny Burney)*; \*\*\* *Oliver Goldsmith*.  
\*\*\* *History of England from the Accession of James II (1849-51)*. (Comes down to the end of the reign of George IV.)

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*Works*: Ed. by Lady Trevelyan. 8 vols., 1866.

*Essays*. 2 vols., Everyman's Library. Many other recent editions.

*Miscellaneous Essays, and Lays of Ancient Rome*. 1 vol. Everyman's Library.

Many other recent editions.

*History of England*. 3 vols., Everyman's Library.

## THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. I.

The strong current of mysticism flowing under the external characteristics of the Scottish peasants (and, indeed, under the skin of the Celts of all lands) was potent ichor in the veins of Thomas Carlyle, himself a Scottish peasant in origin. In the small villages of the lowlands, among certain types of personality, the mysticism sometimes takes the form of a belief in second sight (a supposed ability to see into the future); and the possessor of this gift is described as "fey." In the case of Thomas Carlyle, student of German idealism, the gift was turned over into a transcendental philosophy, none the less mystic and inexplicable for the learned name now applied to it.

Outwardly, that is in everyday affairs, these peasants keep a

powerful restraint upon their mysticism, imprisoning it behind the dikes of a stern morality, the principles and doctrines of Calvinism. It is a curious and paradoxical blend in character, a vague mysticism creating the vision of a literal hell-fire, toward which, with a few favoured exceptions, Predestination is relentlessly marching us. A good argument might, nevertheless, be made to show that the success of the Scot in practical matters is because he sees more of the unseen than do others, nor ever loses sight of the road along which he is going. However this may be, Carlyle kept always present in his mind a morality which had lost none of its original Calvinistic spirit of no-compromise, although it had abandoned all elements of the Calvinistic creed. It is as a moralist that he became a great influence upon his times.

The stern common-sense of the peasant, with an instinctive and also authoritarian Biblical knowledge of right and wrong, of what is true and of what is not true, these were the elements in Carlyle's character that made him stand firm amid the tempests of materialism, utilitarianism, and political economy raging simultaneously over his King Lear-like head, and gave him strength to defy all, proclaiming the ancient truths and the ancient faith in an inscrutable God.

And he answered the dazzling lightning flashes that seemed to him to be striking down, in the storm, all that should stand forever, with a voice tuned to be heard above the roar of the blast. Superlatives he answered with strings of superlatives, piling Ossa on Pelion, until to-day, when the thunder of Victorian arguments is now heard only as a distant, far-off rumble, the voice of Carlyle sounds to the reader like a bewildering clamour; for the violence of such utterances he can conceive no necessity. It is as if a friend, in one's quiet study two feet away insisted on talking at one through an enormous megaphone.

His study of German idealistic philosophy, in particular his



admiration for Goethe, and of German literature likewise strongly coloured his style, lengthening and complicating his sentences until what flowed from his pen was unlike the style of any other English writer before or since. Even Emerson was led to protest against the manner of writing of *Sartor Resartus*.

But for all the noise and cactus-like barrier with which his style hedges about what he has to say there is no man of the nineteenth century with more important ideas to pass on to us of the twentieth. The value of some of his ideas is by way of reminder—"lest we forget"; of others, a permanent addition to the world's thought; of still others, a tonic stimulation to rouse us from our dead selves.

The reader will soon overcome his terror of Carlyle's style, although he will feel at first as if he were in a nightmare experience of galloping headlong with the cavalrymen of Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*. The reader is advised to pay no attention to the chronological order of Carlyle's work, but to begin with \*\*\* *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), originally delivered as a series of lectures, Carlyle's theory in these essays is that "Universal History is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here." He holds that human nature has revered "and must ever reverence great men"; that "in all times and places the Hero has been worshipped." There are six essays: *The Hero as Divinity*; *The Hero as Prophet* (Mahomet); *The Hero as Poet* (Dante-Shakespeare); *The Hero as Priest* (Luther-Knox); *The Hero as Man of Letters* (Johnson-Rousseau-Burns); *The Hero as King* (Cromwell-Napoleon-Modern revolutionism.)

The reader having passed through the stimulating excitement of *Heroes* is now able to face that spiritual autobiography which Carlyle entitled *Sartor Resartus* (1836), "the tailor re-tailored." In writing to his publishers, he said: "It contains more of my opinions on Art, Politics, Religion, Heaven, Earth, and Air, than



all things yet written. The Creed promulgated on all these things is *Mine* and firmly believed."

Next in order should come *The French Revolution* (1837), that inspired piece of philosophical fiction in which facts and the portraits of men become illumined with Carlyle's spiritual insight. He said, in *The Hero as King*, "we will hail the French Revolution, then, as ship-wrecked mariners might the sternest rock, in a world otherwise all of baseless sea and waves. A true Apocalypse, though a terrible one, to the false and artificial times, testifying once more that Nature is *preternatural*; if not divine, then diabolic; that Semblance is not Reality; that it has to become Reality or the world will take fire under it—burn it into what it is, namely Nothing. Plausibility has ended; empty routine has ended; much has ended. This as with the Trump of Doom has been proclaimed to all men."

The reader may close his introduction to Carlyle (remembering that it is only an introduction) with the series of essays entitled *Past and Present* (1843). He attacks violently the materialistic, laissez-faire theory of political economy, offering as a substitute the spirit of religion, duty, and just dealing. In the picture of the past he draws upon the old chronicle of *Jocelyn of Brakelond*,<sup>1</sup> which should be read in connection with these essays.

Additional recommendations: \*\*\* *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations*, 2 vols., (1845); \* *Life of John Sterling* (1851); *The History of Friedrich II of Prussia, called Frederick the Great*, 6 vols., (1858-65), abridged edition, edited by E. Sanderson, 1909; \*\*\* *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 4 vols., 1839.

*Life*: J. Nichol. English Men of Letters series. 1892.

*Carlyle, History of the First Forty Years of his Life, 1795-1835*: J. A. Froude, 2 vols., New ed. 1890.

*Carlyle, History of his Life in London, 1834-1881*: J. A. Froude, 2 vols. 1884.

*Carlyle at his Zenith, 1848-1853*: D. A. Wilson. 1927.

*Works*: Ed. by H. D. Traill, 31 vols., 1897-1901.

<sup>1</sup> *The Chronicle of Jocelyn of Brakelond*: Transl. by L. C. Jane, 2nd. ed., 1922. A picture of the English social and monastic life in the twelfth century.

Carlyle's correspondence with many notable persons has been published in various collections. Noteworthy are his correspondence with Emerson, Goethe, and with Jane Welsh (afterwards his wife).

*Sartor Resartus*, and *Heroes and Hero Worship*. 1 vol. Everyman's Library.

*Past and Present*, with introduction by Emerson. Everyman's Library.

*Letters and Speeches of Cromwell*. 2 vols., Everyman's Library.

*Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*. 2 vols., Everyman's Library.

*French Revolution*. 2 vols., Everyman's Library.

Many other inexpensive, annotated editions of all these writings.

## JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIV, chap. III.

Ruskin, art critic, founder of the aesthetic movement, economist, preacher of ethics, social reformer, Oxford professor, and some other things, was an extraordinarily versatile and copious writer whose influence upon his age and upon the minds of other thinkers and critics, notably Walter Pater and J. A. Symonds, was wide and profound. What he wrote, and some of it was very beautiful writing, has begun to show signs of age; it has not worn as well as it was thought it would when first produced. Of course, there have always been those who were out of patience with Ruskin's economics, just as there were others who hailed him as a social prophet. It is as a social prophet that Ruskin has lost ground even among his admirers; as a literary critic and critic of art, he has said much that is still worth listening to.

To Ruskin we owe a revival of a true interest in the beauty and significance of Gothic architecture. The revival of Gothic earlier in the century was one that concerned itself wholly with the superficial details of this architecture, while totally misunderstanding its beauty and spirit. Ruskin re-awoke us to the spirit of Gothic so that the best work of modern architects in this style of building is not merely imitative but creative, for they have gone back to the source of its inspiration.

In painting, Ruskin was the stout champion of the misunderstood work of J. M. W. Turner and later, of the Pre-Raphaelite



school. His services in making the Philistines aware of the beauty of contemporary and medieval art and architecture can hardly be overemphasized, even though he spoke with the voice of a preacher laying down the law. Much of his law was good law for art and the appreciation of art.

The following selections are chosen for their general interest: \*\*\* *Seven Lamps of Architecture*—the seven are *Sacrifice, Truth, Power, Beauty, Life, Memory, Obedience*. In the essays Ruskin shows the relation of architecture to social ethics.

From *The Stones of Venice* (1851-3): \*\*\* *Characteristics of Gothic Architecture*, vol. II, chap. VI; from *Modern Painters* (1843); \*\*\* *The Grand Style*, vol. III, chap. I; \*\*\* *Of the Pathetic Fallacy*, vol. III, chap. XII; *Of Classical Landscape*, vol. III, chap. XIII; *Of Modern Landscape*, vol. III, chap. lxxxvi; *The Two Boyhoods*, vol. V, pt. 9, chap. IX.

\*\*\* *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), *Preface* and three lectures on *Work, Traffic, War*. From *Fors Clavigera* (1871-1884). \*\*\* Letter 5.

\*\*\* *The Mystery of Life and its Arts* (1868).

\*\*\* *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851).

\* *Modern Painters*. Abridged ed., by A. J. Finberg. 1927.

*Life*: Frederic Harrison. Men of Letters series.

*Life and Work of John Ruskin*: W. G. Collingwood, new ed. The standard biography.

*Works*: Ed. by E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn. 39 vols., 1903-12.

*Modern Painters*. 5 vols., Everyman's Library.

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*Crown of Wild Olive*. Everyman's Library.

*Ethics of the Dust*. Everyman's Library.

*Selections*: Ed. by C. B. Tinker. Riverside series. 1908.

\* *Sesame and Lilies, Ethics of the Dust*. 1 vol. World's Classics series.

\* *Unto this Last, Munera Pulveris*. 1 vol. World's Classics series.

*Ruskin, A Study in Personality*: A. C. Benson. 1911.

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## WALTER PATER (1839-1894)

Pater's "hard and gemlike flame" illumines the path of very few to-day. A disciple of Ruskin, without Ruskin's socialistic handclasp for the hard fisted comrades of the world, Pater lived in the seclusion of the Oxford cloisters writing and meditating on "art for art's sake," or if it is allowable to translate the phrase, "art for exquisiteness' sake."

He wrote a dull novel beautifully, entitled \* *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), in which he dwells much on his philosophy of



neo-Epicureanism. His sentences are so perfect and so finely wrought, that the reader's attention in time fails to hold any more such even intricacies; they all drop out of his memory, and in the end, he catches himself wondering what it was that Pater said on the preceding page. All—all is gone, for there is no individuality of familiar faces in these sentences, no roughnesses to jolt a wandering mind sliding unresisting over the exquisite polish of their icy surfaces.

As a critic Pater is much to be preferred to the author of *Marius the Epicurean*. He is the same Pater, it is true, but his sensitive, fastidious mind is a good touchstone by which to test some kinds of literature. Many references to his volume of critical essays \*\*\* *Appreciations* (1889) have been made in the bibliographies in this book.

*Life*: A. C. Benson. English Men of Letters series. 1906.

*Works*. New Library edition. 10 vols. 1910.

*Selections from Pater*. Riverside College Classics.

This is an excellent selection from Pater's better known essays, including \*\*\* *Preface to Studies in the Renaissance* (1873), the reading of which is essential for understanding Pater.

John Lublock [Lord Avebury] (1834-1913). \*\**Pleasures of Life*, new ed., 1921.

A forgotten series of good essays.

Frederic Harrison (1831-1923). \* *Choice of Books, and Other Literary Pieces* (1886).

## The Oxford Movement

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. XII.

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See also bibliography under John Henry Newman.

## JOHN HENRY (CARDINAL) NEWMAN (1801-1890)

Newman's relation to the controversies of the Oxford Movement will not be referred to here, except to advise the reader to

add to his biographies Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864), in which we learn, at least, one side of the story. This autobiography is the record of Newman's spiritual life, written in a finely worked, simple, and restrained prose.

Still interesting to-day is the series of essays (they were delivered as lectures) on \*\*\* *The Idea of a University*. In these essays Newman sets forth his conception of a university, in direct challenge to the utilitarian theory of education, namely, that knowledge should be imparted for the sake of its vocational or professional use. Newman declared that the purpose of a university education was the enlargement or illumination of the intellect. Further, "the enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas which are rushing in upon it." Again: "And therefore a truly great intellect . . . is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these on one another."

Newman was also the author of the well-known hymn *Lead, Kindly Light*, his title for which was *A Pillar of Cloud*.

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## Nineteenth Century Poetry

Hazlitt, writing in the early part of the century, listed four names as supreme in English poetry, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton. No one can quarrel with this list, for each of these poets stands alone, unique, above his fellows in his own age, and, moreover, not to be compared one with the other. In Hazlitt's time, however, two names were to be added to his choice, Shelley and Keats. There is a possibility of dispute here: some



critics might vote to exclude Shelley, others would oppose Keats, not, be it understood, on the ground that these men were not great poets, but they would question their right to be included in the ranks of the six greatest. When it is further remembered that the nineteenth century can offer in addition to these two, the genius of Wordsworth and Coleridge, of Byron, of Tennyson and Browning, together with a host of other names, perhaps the safest statement to make is that the time has not yet come to decide the final ranking of this group of poets. The important fact for the general reader is that in the poetry of this century alone he will find enough good reading to give him a lifetime of satisfaction.

Some attempt at an explanation of the word "romantic" so frequently applied to the poetry, particularly that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, is necessary. Any reader who has considered some of the more important poems, say of Wordsworth and Coleridge, of Byron, of Keats and Shelley, must become aware that if "romantic" is a blanket term applied to all this variety of poetry, it is either an extremely elastic word or else one capable of several definitions.

As a matter of fact no single definition will serve, since "romantic" designates, first, an atmosphere, an impression, a feeling—all intangible effects produced by this poetry, but effects not easy or possible to put into specific words. It is as well to begin with the conventional explanation of "romantic" as applicable to those varieties of literary expression the primary appeal of which is to the emotions and not to the intellect. It is, in this sense, independent of the subject-matter, which may be, as often in Wordsworth, precise statements of fact about nature, or, as in Coleridge, the presentation of a shadow world of the supernatural, provided the impression upon the reader is an emotional one.

Again, romanticism may be defined in terms of the subject-



matter; for example the medieval dream-world of Coleridge's *Christabel* is romantic material; so also is Sir Walter Scott's entirely different medieval world, which is the past idealized. Motives, emotions, characters may also be idealized, and then critics speak of these aspects of a writer's work as "romantic." Sometimes the poet may visualize a future in which all the blemishes of his contemporary world have vanished, a returned Golden Age, so to speak, such as William Morris, near the end of the century, dreamed of. This, too, is a phase of romanticism. Another may cry out "the times are out of joint, O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set them right," and with this cry proclaim himself a romantic. Yet there is one quest that the romantics follow in common and that is the quest of beauty. To Wordsworth the beauty of nature, of simple flowers even, was proof of God; to Coleridge, beauty was to be found in dreams; to Shelley, in his abstract ideas through the understanding of which alone could beauty be brought into the heart of man; to Keats, above all, in colours and the shapes of things. And beauty, for most men is seen through the imagination when a deep emotion has stirred it. That is why it is said that romantic poetry appeals primarily to the imagination.

A writer is a romantic when either the world of reality or the world he creates in his imagination moves him deeply enough to picture his world beautifully, to point out its beauties, or to protest that it is not as beautiful as it ought to be.

Thus it may be seen that a poem may be considered romantic if the effect of it upon the reader is to move him, to awaken his imagination, or to give him a new vision of beauty. A writer, also, may be classed as a romantic if his attitude toward his world is that of an idealist, if his purpose is to portray beauty, or if he has a philosophy derived less from facts than from his own sensitiveness. In subject-matter the romantic usually prefers the strange and unusual; he prefers adventures, even the adventures of the

soul, to closely reasoned thought and the analysis of motives; he hates the ugly and base, and if he finds in the facts of life too much that is ugly and base, either he turns his back upon them, or demands that we substitute his ideals for these ugly facts. Above all he insists upon beauty as the goal of art. Lastly, it is when the question-begging word "beauty" is reached that all definitions of romanticism end in failure, for who shall say what this myriad-sided, myriad-coloured word means? Yet it is recognized when present, and the general reader will find it often present in the great poetry of the nineteenth century.

### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. v.

Certainly no other poet before Wordsworth has set down for us a more minute analysis of the thoughts, ideas, and feelings on which his poems and system of poetry were based. It is possible to trace the background of all of his work through what he has told us of himself, to follow each step in his mental development, and to study the processes of his mind from the inception of an idea until his thought reached its expression in his poetry. He was among the most self-conscious of poets: that is to say, he worked always with a definite plan to be carried out, trusting not at all to that vague concept "inspiration," which has served, as well as often betrayed, other poets. This is not, however, the place to enquire into the technique Wordsworth's poetry.

As a poet he was interested in certain ideas and things; not always the same ideas and things, yet working always against a background of thought. First, he had a passionate love of nature, coupled with accurate powers of observation—an eye always "on the object." Nature, particularly in its aspects of outward beauty, was to him evidence which revealed the existence of God. By a close contact with, and study of Nature man came near to God, and to the comprehension of "Nature's holy plan."



Second, he believed in the innate goodness of the child, a faith derived from his Platonic idea that the child had but recently come from a celestial home, "trailing clouds of glory," and that life, "the prison house" has not yet with its shades wholly obscured the memory of the bliss from which the new born soul had descended.

In the third place, in his youth he was a believer in the theories of the French revolution, hence his yearnings for the brotherhood of man and his loathing for "man's inhumanity to man." Could the world but preserve the simplicity of life, inspired by a contact with nature and remembering the heaven whence it came, it would inevitably discover that the relation of man to man was that of liberty, equality, and fraternity—or words to that effect.

Once more, Wordsworth believed that one of the functions of poetry is to teach the truths which the poet had distilled from his experience. Among these truths were moral ideas, such as the concept of duty, the necessity for "plain living and high thinking," and in general, those ideas that our minds naturally associate with the phrase "the simple virtues."

Finally, the whole of the moral ideas were to be assembled in a poem expressive of his whole philosophy, from *The Prelude*, the ante-chapel of the great cathedral (the contributions of youth), *The Excursion*, or the approach through the nave of experience, to *The Recluse*, where at the high altar, the philosopher would at last preach his faith. The whole plan of this "Gothic Cathedral," as Wordsworth described his philosophical poem, was not finished, but enough was built to give us the main piers and their foundations.

The most important single influence upon Wordsworth's political and humanitarian thought was that of Rousseau. From this erratically brilliant sentimentalist he derived, in part, his faith in the goodness of the child,<sup>1</sup> his idealistic republicanism, his

<sup>1</sup> The doctrines of the neo-Platonists had a share in his concept.



distrust of intellectual civilization, a distrust that sent him back to nature and turned him away from books, and, in short, the general undercurrent of all his views until the failure of the high hopes inspired by the French Revolution brought about his disillusionment.

Next in importance to the political influence of Rousseau upon his thought was the personal contact of philosophical and literary theories of his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge upon his mind. It was in 1797 that the association between the two became close, culminating in the publication by them of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, with its famous preface proclaiming Wordsworth's theory of poetry. Coleridge was an eloquent talker who was deeply read in mystic or transcendental philosophy, German as well as that of Plato and Bishop Berkeley. Up to this time the rationalism of the Eighteenth Century and Godwin's *Political Justice* had more or less dominated, in conjunction with Rousseau, Wordsworth's mind. Coleridge contributed new elements to the fabric of Wordsworth's philosophy, strengthening even more that optimism about finality which is the characteristic of Wordsworth's settled faith.

The general reader, who wishes to read some of the best of Wordsworth's poems, may begin with the selections listed below. They have been chosen with the view of being representative of the important aspects of his thought, as well as with the intention of making a choice from among his best poetry. The reader is advised, however, first to read the \*\*\* Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*.

Poems: *Written in Very Early Youth*; *Lines Left Upon a Seat in a Yew Tree*; \*\*\* *We Are Seven*; \*\* *Simon Lee*; \*\*\* *Lines Written in Early Spring*; *To My Sister*; *Expostulation and Reply*; \*\*\* *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*; *The Old Cumberland Beggar*; \*\* *Influence of Natural Objects*; \*\* *There was a Boy*; \*\* *Nutting*; *Strange Fits of Passion*; \*\*\* *She Dwelt Among Untrodden Ways*; *I Travelled Among Unknown Men*; \*\*\* *Three Years She Grew*; \*\*\* *Lucy Gray, or Solitude*; \*\*\* *Michael*; *Alice Fell, or Poverty*; \*\*\* *My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold*; *Resolution and Independence*; \*\*\* *Composed Upon Westminster Bridge*; \*\* *To Toussaint L'Ouverture*; \*\*\* *London, 1802*; *It Is Not To Be Thought Of*;

*When I Have Borne in Memory*; \*\* *To the Daisy*; *To the Same Flower*; *To the Daisy* (third poem on the same subject); *To a Highland Girl*; \*\*\* *The Solitary Reaper*; \*\*\* *To the Cuckoo*; \*\*\* *She Was a Phantom of Delight*; \*\*\* *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* (sometimes called *The Daffodils*); *The Small Celandine*; \*\*\* *Ode to Duty*; \*\*\* *To A Sky-Lark*; \*\*\* Selections from *The Prelude*: Book I, ll. 301-612; Book II, ll. 265-451; Book III, ll. 90-143. (These passages are the poet's account of his youth and education); Book V, ll. 347-425 (book knowledge and natural knowledge); ll. 491-533 (writers of romances and their gifts); Book VIII, ll. 1-475 (how love of nature inspires love of man); ll. 560-675 (first arrival at London and the effect upon the poet); Book XI, ll. 105-222 (*Ode to France and the French Revolution*) ll. 270-305 (the poet disillusioned of hope of social idealism); ll. 323-356 (sustained by his sister's love); Book XIII, ll. 1-47 (emotion comes from nature); ll. 120-141 (youth and love); ll. 186-205 (love); ll. 279-312 (creative power of the poet learned from nature). \*\*\* *Character of the Happy Warrior*; \*\*\* *The World Is Too Much With Us*; \*\*\* *Ode, Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*; *I Grieved for Buonaparte*; *At the Grave of Burns*; \*\*\* *Personal Talk*; \*\* *Here Pause*; \*\* *Scorn Not the Sonnet*; \*\* "*Therel*" *Said a Stripling*; *A Poet*; \*\* *Great Men Have Been Among Us*.

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## SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. VI.

It has been truly said<sup>1</sup> that "it was the genius of Wordsworth . . . that first revealed him [Coleridge] to himself." Up until the time of his association with Wordsworth, Coleridge had been an ardent preacher of the new political gospels inspired by the French Revolution, and with Southey had evolved a theory of government which they described as a pantisocracy. From Wordsworth, however, came the inspiration to be a poet. The word "inspiration," as applied to Coleridge's poetry, is as good a term as any other to explain the subtle magic with which genius makes use of its materials. That, on the other hand, he did not become as great a poet as his genius promised, was because his will was not strong enough to control continuously the flame within him. He has given nevertheless to English poetry three supreme poems, *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, Part I, published with poems by Wordsworth in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798, and the splendid fragment *Kubla Khan*.

In *Biographia Literaria*, chap. XIV, Coleridge has given an account of his association as a poet with Wordsworth, and the share he was to undertake in writing poems to be included in *Lyrical Ballads*. He defined his poetical task in the following words: ". . . it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of the imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." No better description of Coleridge's three masterpieces can be given than to say that

<sup>1</sup> By C. E. Vaughan in *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. XI, p. 132.



they create in the reader a "willing suspension of disbelief" while the spell of these poems is upon him.

As a literary critic Coleridge broke new ground. The eighteenth century had formulated rules and standards, in part derived from Horace's *Art of Poetry*, by which all works were to be compared and æsthetic judgments rendered chiefly on the basis of conformity to the theoretical type. Furthermore, Horace had said that one of the purposes of poetry was to instruct; the moral improvement of mankind was thus necessary to the justification of literature. Coleridge boldly laid down the principle that the true end of poetry is to give immediate pleasure, and that it is through the medium of beauty that this pleasure comes. Æsthetic pleasure arises from those works of art in which we recognize an organic unity. This unity is achieved when structure, character, poetry all combine to enhance the imaginative effect which the poet had in view. The recognition of this unity comes by the effect upon the reader (or beholder) and not by any reference of the work of art to a set of rules. The source of æsthetic pleasure is within the reader's own emotions, upon which no critical yardstick<sup>1</sup> can act as a veritable stimulus.

Coleridge's importance as a philosopher, like Carlyle's, lies less in any system devised by him than in the fact that he re-spiritualized philosophy, standing out successfully against the mechanistic theories of Locke and the French school. His main source was in Kant, and in lesser part, Fichte and Schelling. His main purpose was to find a spiritual and religious interpretation of nature.

Selections for reading: Poems: *Pantisocracy*; \* *La Fayette*; \*\* *The Æolian Harp*; \*\*\* *The Ancient Mariner*; \*\*\* *Christabel*, Part I; \* *France, an Ode*; \*\*\* *Lewti*; \* *Fears in Solitude*; \*\* *The Dark Ladie*; \*\*\* *Kubla Khan*; \* *Dejection, an Ode*; \*\* *Hymn Before Sunrise*; \* *The Pains of Sleep*; \* *Time Real and Imaginary*; \* *Work Without Hope*.

Prose: \*\*\* *Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare*; \*\* *Biographia Literaria*.

<sup>1</sup> See Matthew Arnold on "touchstones."

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## ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774-1843)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XI, chap. VIII.

The fame and popularity of Southey the poet has passed at the present day into an eclipse, a darkness that may be more even than a passing phase, the very gloom of oblivion itself. This is a pity, for a generation that still can visualize in its imagination at least the peruke and high boots of the Duke of Marlborough, ought to wish to listen again to old Kaspar recite the ballad of the \*\* *Battle of Blenheim*.

It is not strange that Southey's long narrative poems in unrhymed metrical verses have been forgotten, except by literary critics, since the regularity and even polish of their verses make them dull reading, apart from any question of a changed taste causing a loss of interest in their subject-matter. Byron per-



haps is right in calling this poet "too mouthy." On the other hand, against Byron's judgment (partly inspired by an antagonism of a political nature) must be placed the admiration of Walter Savage Landor, and the close association of Southey as poet with Coleridge and Wordsworth. A reader wishing to form his own opinion of Southey's merits should turn to \* *The Curse of Kehama* (1810). This is a Hindu romance of the supernatural, in rhymed verse. Critics are fairly well agreed that this is Southey's best poem, technically and in sustained effect. The early *Joan of Arc*, an epic poem, is mentioned for the sake of readers who wish to examine all instances of the appeal of the Maid to the literary imagination.

Further poems suggested are the following ballads: *The Inchcape Rock*; *The Crocodile King*; \* *Bishop Hatto*; *The Cross Roads*; \* *Old Woman of Berkeley*; *Queen Orraca*; \* *The Old Man's Comforts* (see Lewis Carroll's parody of this in *Alice in Wonderland*); *The Holly Tree*.

Southey's influence upon his contemporaries has already been hinted at, but this important phase of his career is best studied in the biographies of "the Lakers." His *Vision of Judgment* (1821) written upon the occasion of George III's death inspired Byron, by the method of irritation, to write his own great poem of the same title.

Southey the prose writer has left one of the great short biographies of English literature, \*\*\* *The Life of Nelson* (1813). No reader of biography can afford to neglect this book, for it is an example of clear, straightforward writing, explaining accurately enough Lord Nelson's character and narrating the incidents of his life, the whole forming a patriotic and thrillingly dramatic story.

In the remaining great mass of Southey's prose the modern reader will not find much to his taste, unless the subject of *The Life of Wesley* (1820) is one to attract him. His *Sir Thomas*



*More: or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society* (1829) suggested to Landor the form of *Imaginary Conversations*.

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## GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. II.

It is not profitable to say anything about the poetry of Byron without any reference to the events of his life, since his poetry and his life are closely interrelated, and to understand the former it is necessary to know something about the latter.

Byron came of an old, aristocratic family, and his pride in his birth and in his title existed throughout a life during which his political theories were radical and even republican. Here is one of the first of those numerous conflicts in his character, his love of liberty and of political freedom united with an aristocratic instinct that caused him in contact with his fellowmen to show the arrogance and aloofness of his social class.

His mother, Catherine Gordon of Gight, took him at an early age to Aberdeen (his father died when Byron was three years old), and his boyhood was thus spent in the Highlands of Scotland. In 1801 he entered Harrow school; from thence he went in 1805 to Trinity College, Cambridge. During his undergraduate days he published two volumes of verse, *Fugitive Pieces* and *Hours of Idleness* (1807).

*The Edinburgh Review*, then the dreaded scourge of young

poets, savagely attacked his *Hours of Idleness*. Byron was peculiarly sensitive to hostile criticism; he retaliated with the first of his famous poems, and with the first example of his skill in satire, with \* *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). In this poem he attacks with the self-confidence of youth the whole contemporary world of letters; satirically Byron proclaimed his opposition to the romantic school of poetry, setting up as his avowed models Dryden and Pope, having words of commendation only for Rogers, Campbell, and Moore among living poets. Later in life (1816), he admitted that he had been unjust in some of his critical judgments. His hatred of romanticism, moreover, only goes to show how impossible it is for a man to escape from the spirit of his age, for Byron himself is an unquestioned romantic in his life as well as in his poetry.

Soon after taking his seat in the House of Lords at the age of twenty-one (he had succeeded to the title in 1798) he set forth with his friend Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton) for a year of travel in the Mediterranean and near east, visiting Spain, Portugal, and the Balkan peninsula, then a feudal series of principalities under Turkish suzerainty. Upon his return he published Cantos I and II of \* *Childe Harold* (1812), and awoke next day to find himself famous.

This portion of *Childe Harold* (he is later to add to it) is a vivid travel picture of the scenes through which Byron had recently passed. On the heels of *Childe Harold*, came his oriental verse tales *The Giaour* (1813) *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), *Lara* (1814), and *The Siege of Corinth* (1816). The popularity of these romantic and highly coloured narratives was extraordinary, eclipsing even the fame of Sir Walter Scott as a story-telling poet and driving that great man to the writing of prose instead, a change confirmatory of Emerson's theory of compensation. Young men to-day find these oriental tales by Byron picturesque and stirring, but the vogue of verse narrative



has passed away. Perhaps \* *The Bride of Abydos* is a sufficiently typical example for a new reader of Byron.

In 1815 Byron married Miss Milbanke; a year later, shortly after the birth of their child Ada, this unhappily assorted couple parted, and Byron left England never to return. In the scandal that surrounded their separation the public chose the side of Lady Byron. The poet, angered at the injustice of a condemnation which assumed the worst of him, went to the Continent (1816), became acquainted with the Shelleys in Switzerland, and at length chose Venice as his refuge. An insight into his mental attitude at this important crisis of his life may be obtained by reading \* *Epistle to Augusta* (addressed to his half-sister, Augusta Leigh) and the \*\*\* *Third Canto of Childe Harold* (1816). To this same period belongs \*\* *The Prisoner of Chillon* in which he strikes a note of true emotion and simplicity.

In 1817 he published his drama \* *Manfred*, the resemblance of which to Goethe's *Faust* resulted in a correspondence between these two, the elder poet taking a great interest in the work of the younger. But *Manfred* is no mere imitation of *Faust*; the drama is marked with the height of Byron's genius, the spiritual mystery of the conflict of a hero striving to remain master of his fate.

He had gone to Ravenna in 1819 to be near the Countess Guiccioli, and through her and her relatives became linked with the Carboneria, an Italian secret society of nationalistic and revolutionary purposes. During his life in Italy he kept in close touch with political thought in England, particularly expressing his hostility to the reactionary type of government that followed not only in England but also throughout the Continent after the downfall of Napoleon.

From 1818 to 1823 Byron was at work upon his masterpiece \*\*\* *Don Juan*. He described it as an "Epic Satire," which it is, but it is even more than this. It is a full and complete revela-



tion of Byron's personality, showing every mood and paradox of his extraordinary self. Further, it contains scenes and incidents of amazing variety, from the horrors of shipwreck and death by thirst in an open boat at sea to the comedy of manners of English Society. It is, in short, the panorama of human life seen through the eyes of and interpreted by a young man, and as such is unique in all literature. *Don Juan* is not only a work of genius but also it places Byron securely on that comparatively brief roster of the truly great.

Suggested supplementary reading in Byron's poetry: *Written after swimming from Sestos to Abydos*; \*\*\* *Maid of Athens*; \*\*\* *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*; \*\* *Stanzas for Music* (1814); \*\*\* *On this day I complete my thirty-sixth year*; \* *She Walks in Beauty*; \*\* *The Destruction of Sennacherib*; \*\* *The Vision of Judgment* (See, also, Southey's poem to which this is Byron's reply); \* *Mazeppa*; \* *Beppo, A Venetian Story*; *The Prophecy of Dante*; \* *Cain, a Mystery* (drama).

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## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. III.

There is no more baffling poet to recommend to the general reader than Shelley. It is true that everyone has read more than once in anthologies of English lyrics the superb \*\*\* *Ode to the West*

*Wind* and \*\*\* *To a Skylark*; but to become a true Shelleyan is more a gift of nature than a function of the will. Quite worthy and respectable citizens, and even some useful ones, have passed all their lives without comprehending Shelley's vision of intellectual beauty, or making much effort to understand him. Others, equally important in this world, have made the attempt only to abandon it as one of those enterprises of which the results are not worth the time involved. Still others, honest men and true, have not been visited in their cradles by even a poor relation of a good fairy and have, therefore, grown up without any capacity for liking Shelley's poetry. One may not hold it against a person who does not care for Shelley beyond remarking that those who do not have missed some part of the great vision that Poetry is able to bring to us.

The difficulty of understanding Shelley arises from the fact that his vision of beauty is metaphysical—an abstract conception which mere words are inadequate symbols to convey. He feels beauty to be a spirit living and working through the universe; that once mankind recognizes this truth, he will further discover that the spirit of beauty is sustained by love. Thus the road to the perfectibility of human nature<sup>1</sup> lies through understanding and, in a sense, becoming at one with intellectual beauty. This is a rarefied atmosphere, to be sure, that Shelley leads one into, yet the breathing of it is worth the trying, accompanied as it is by the exquisite music of his verse. If the reader finds that it leaves him gasping, better he pass at once to another poet, say to an apprenticeship with John Keats, and in time he may become worthy of Shelley.

For the reader prepared to test his Shelleyan powers, \*\* *The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and \*\* the Dedication to *The Revolt of Islam* are the avenues of approach. The one defines, as far as words may explain, what intellectual beauty is; the other de-

<sup>1</sup> See William Godwin, p. 215.



scribes the coming of the vision of the concept and the poet's vow to its service.

The Shelley who is the disciple of Godwin's theories of political justice is not so moving a figure, although he believed Godwin's principles to be but the practical application to life and government of intellectual beauty, and hence this Shelley is an integral part of the other, the pure poet. The Shelley of the Godwinian creed is to be found in \* *Queen Mab* (1813). The passionate sincerity of this spiritual boy makes even his imperfections awe-inspiring.

In \*\* *Alastor* (1815) we have the confession of the frustrate idealist, a beautiful allegory portraying the tragedy of the search in reality for the counterpart of an ideal.

The year 1816 is the date of his first acquaintance with Byron and his reading of Plato, begun the winter before, two influences of considerable importance to his poetry, especially that of Plato. The *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* derives, of course, for its central concept (or idea) from Platonic philosophy.

In 1818, Shelley and his wife, Mary, became, like Byron, permanent outcasts in Italy, and at Byron's villa at Este, near Venice, he wrote \* *Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills*. The mood of sorrow that lay heavily upon him at this time brings him, in this poem, close to nature, almost in the Wordsworthian sense, but with the Shelleyan difference of a more subtle thought and music, a mood again reflected in \* *Stanzas Written in Dejection near Naples*.

\* *Julian and Maddalo* is a poetical record of the intimate, personal conversations of Byron and Shelley. It is not easy to recreate in one's imagination the facts about the friendship between these two dissimilar men, Byron, the paradoxical cynic and satirical exponent of world-weariness, and Shelley believing that there must be hope for mankind. Each saw a world of such difference that there is no resemblance in what was seen.



**\*\* *Prometheus Unbound*** is the triumphant utterance of Shelley's creed—his faith in the destiny of man. Humanity is certain to triumph, even over the gods who, jealous of man's glorious future, seek to bind him down, and the means of his triumph over the tyranny of the gods shall be love.

This drama was followed by one intended for representation upon the stage,\* *The Cenci*, the tragic story, historical in fact, of Beatrice Cenci. Of all the poets of the Nineteenth Century who attempted the dramatic form, Shelley alone achieved a great and practical stage tragedy. The play was rejected, and for many years the censorship barred it from the theatre because its theme is incest.

**\*\* *The Sensitive Plant*** strikes a new and deeper note in the beauty of Shelley's lyric power, and who walks in the garden where grows this plant, either in spring or the fading autumn, will come away knowing more of beauty.

The same feeling of beauty pervades **\*\*\* *Adonais***, his tribute to the poet Keats, written upon learning of his death.

The following poems are suggested, in addition to those already mentioned, to complete an introduction to Shelley: **\*\* *Episychidion***; *To Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin*; *To Coleridge*; *To Wordsworth*; *On Fanny Godwin*; **\*\*\* *Ozymandias***; *Fragment*, *To Byron*; *Song to the Men of England*; **\*\* *Sonnet, England in 1819***; **\*\*\* *The Indian Serenade***; **\*\*\* *The Cloud***; **\*\* *Arethusa***; *Hymn of Pan*; **\*\* *Autumn, a Dirge***; **\*\* *To Night***; *Mutability (1821)*; *To Edward Williams*; *To — (One word is too often profaned)*; *When the Lamp is Shattered*; *To Jane, The Invitation*; *With a Guitar*, *To Jane*.

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## JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. IV.

Shelley and Keats are the two halves of the dazzling shield of nineteenth century poetry, Shelley the darker, hidden side, Keats the clear, sharp reflector of all the shapes that beauty may take in the pictures of the imagination. To Keats the world is literally a world of wonders, of things of beauty, beautiful especially through their forms and their colours, among which he includes visions that other men have set forth in legend or song.

This boy of humble origin, like Shakespeare in this fact, found, like Shakespeare again, that genius is an awakening of the spirit, seemingly requiring no heredity of culture for its preparation, but derivable from environment working in some inexplicable way within. The environment first was provided by his master at school, Charles Cowden Clarke, who initiated him into Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, followed by other Elizabethans, particularly Chapman. The sonnet, and the earliest of his great songs, \*\*\* *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* (1815) was the proof of his awakening.

The second important personal influence upon the young man was that of Leigh Hunt, whom often he visited at the Hampstead cottage. He met there several figures of the literary world, notably Hazlitt and Shelley.<sup>1</sup> For a time the poetry of Leigh Hunt strongly affected Keats' verse, but the stirrings of his

<sup>1</sup> His acquaintance with Shelley was slight.



own genius were, nevertheless, evident, particularly in \* *Sleep and Poetry*.

His reading, meanwhile, was growing wider: Wordsworth, Shakespeare, the Greeks and the Elizabethans, Byron, Chatterton, Boccaccio, and finally Milton are the chief names in the list. \* *Endymion* (1817) is the result of the beginning of his development, and it is his first long poem. The theme of the poem illustrates Keats' attitude toward beauty: Endymion the lover of the moon finds in the moon the symbol of all beauty, and thus becomes a lover of all loveliness. The poem is uneven but marked by passages of great beauty. The general reader will prefer, perhaps, to turn to these passages. The following may be suggested: *Introduction*; *The Sea Floor*; *Hymn to Pan* (Book I); *O Sorrow* (Book IV). Keats has himself described this poem in the preface as "a feverish attempt rather than a deed accomplished."

The next step in his progress is shown in \* *Isabella*, the retelling of a story from Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The delicacy with which Keats touches the romance impresses the reader, and though his full maturity has not yet been reached, lovers of poetry will turn often to this poem.

\*\* *Hyperion*, begun only six months after *Endymion* was finished, suddenly reaches the summit of his achievement. The work was left incomplete, for the plan and scale of this epic were beyond the experience and perhaps beyond the powers of a young man to carry out. The comparison is inevitably made with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and in spite of the magic beauty of Keats' verse, technical judgment falls on Milton's side; the general reader votes for Keats. But this judgment is a technical one of criticism, one which the general reader is not so likely to make. For him *Hyperion* remains a joy for ever.

\*\*\* *The Eve of St. Agnes* is the most perfect and the most beautiful of the poetic romances of the nineteenth century. At last the genius of Keats is in full flower and his sensitive instinct



for beauty revealed most completely. One may neither write nor argue about this poem, for no words can describe or reproduce its effect upon a reader. The recognition of its beauty is a test of one's appreciation of poetry.

Savouring the charm of such lyrics as \*\* *Lines on the Mermaid Tavern* and \*\* *Bards of Passion and of Mirth* the reader will reach the culmination of his enjoyment of Keats in the series of great odes \*\*\* *Autumn*, \*\*\* *Melancholy*, \*\*\* *To a Nightingale*, and greatest of all, \*\*\* *The Ode on a Grecian Urn*. This ode, with Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, is justly held by critics to be one of the greatest examples of English lyric verse. The preference here, for the *Grecian Urn* or *The West Wind* is a question of personal taste. In the *Urn* the spirit of beauty is tangible; in *The West Wind* it is truly a spirit, and one of the loftiest as yet conceived in the mind of man. To find anything comparable to these two lyrics as examples of the power of the creative imagination one must turn to Shakespeare.

Suggested supplementary reading: *To Leigh Hunt, Esq.*; \* *I Stood Tiptoe; Specimen of an Induction to a Poem*—\* the passage to Spenser; \*\* *Sleep and Poetry*; \*\*\* *Lamia; Fancy*; \*\* *Ode on Melancholy*.

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## ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. II.

The younger critics have spent about a generation now in sneering at the poetry of Tennyson. To burst out laughing

when his name is mentioned has become, in some circles, a symbol of "intellectuality," a sign, as it were, to show that we had been initiated into "the intelligentsia." He has been elevated by these critics, not to the eminence where he stands by his own achievements, but to a pedestal of their making where they pelt him merrily as the incarnation of all that they mean, when they mean anything at all, by the term "mid-Victorian." One is reminded of Tennyson's poem *Saint Simeon Stylites*—the multitude at the foot of the column scoff but are unable to do as much for their faith as the man on top has done for his.

These critics have undoubtedly diminished the number of readers of Tennyson in this generation; they have banished from the living-room table the "gift copy" of his poems, bound in red velvet with gilt edges. One dares not leave a copy of him about for fear of lifted eye-brows by one's visitors. One must read him now, surreptitiously, alone, in dread of literary raiders from Chelsea or Greenwich Village bursting in and catching one at heretical devotions.

Perhaps it is well to admit at once that there are some poems of Tennyson that cause irritation to the present day reader, just as there are many poems of Wordsworth that produce boredom. But a poet should be judged by his best work, not by his worst. Even irritations are sometimes a question of fashion. Many a man we think of with gratitude for a single poem that he wrote. Why then should we condemn Tennyson who wrote many great poems, because he wrote others that seem annoying to our present mood? Can we laugh away his skill in verse-form, or his beauty of images by our pose of amused contempt for his philosophy of life?

Tennyson, to say the worst of him at once, had what the jargon of to-day calls a "bourgeois" mind on social questions, by which is meant that he believed in domesticity, friendship, patriotism, God, and other similar and simple ideas now unfashionable.



Sometimes he stated these beliefs with a complacency which implied that the world is very well as it is, or at least, could be very well with a little more faith and charity spread around it. There was nothing revolutionary in Tennyson's ideas; he had no theory of a new system of government founded upon political economy sentimentalized; he had never heard of psycho-analysis, hence he still thought men morally accountable for their actions; he believed women could not only be civilized, but also domesticated; and he was not ashamed to admit that he had won his struggle with the doubts that had assailed his faith. He thought a Christian commonwealth under intelligent leadership would be a fairly good government, if evil-minded men would leave it alone, and he was still in the mental state that regarded adultery as a sin.

But the significant thing about Tennyson is that he is a poet, and therefore to find fault with him because he is not at the same time an original philosopher, a socialist, a radical, a free-thinker, and a revolutionist, is a little beside the point. He is, next to Shakespeare, most definitely, the average man's poet, which is as much as to say, that he can give more pleasure through his poetry to more readers, and has, than any one except his great predecessor. And as a poet's poet, he need not tremble at comparisons. If he does not ever reach the summit of Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* or Keats' *Grecian Urn*, nevertheless his visions of beauty are more generally communicable, and as he *has* visions of beauty, one need ask no more of him.

To the student of the technique of poetry Tennyson is profoundly interesting for the reason that he constantly revised and rewrote his poems and has left the varying versions for study and comparison. This is a point, however, that does not so much concern the general reader.

The following list of poems is, from the present compiler's viewpoint, poetry about which there can be little dispute, with the exception of a few titles to illustrate certain ideas of Tenny-



son. It is in no sense intended, however, as an ideal anthology, or a completely representative one. It is mostly the Tennyson one likes to read and reread. For the sake of the reader who wishes to have his laugh about Tennyson's Mid-Victorianism, and get it over with so that he can then enjoy his poetry, it is suggested that this reader begin with the dedication *To the Queen*, prefixed to the first Laureate edition of 1851.

The list: \*\*\* *The Lady of Shalott* (his first lyric version of the Lancelot-Elaine story); \*\*\* *Mariana in the South*; \* *The Two Voices* (a struggle with doubt); \*\*\* *Oenone* (the prayer of the nymph Oenone after her desertion by Paris); \* *The Palace of Art*; *Lady Clara Vere de Vere* (for its irritating effect; an example of what the present generation dislikes in Tennyson—"Kind hearts are more than coronets, And simple faith than Norman blood."); \*\*\* *The Lotos-Eaters* and *Choric Song* (Tennyson's summit in the lyric); \*\* *A Dream of Fair Women*; \* *Love Thou Thy Land*; (his patriotism and conservatism); \*\* *Saint Simeon Stylites*; \*\*\* *Ulysses*; \*\*\* *Locksley Hall* (note particularly the prophecies—air navigation and warfare, world-war, a league of nations; also note the reference to science); \* *Saint Agnes' Eve*; \*\* *Sir Galahad*; \*\*\* *The Voyage* (see Palgrave's note to this poem, in *Lyrical Poems of Tennyson*); From *The Princess* (\*\*\* all the Songs); From \*\*\* *In Memoriam*: Introduction: I, III, V, VI, XXVII, XXXIII, XXXIV, XXXVI, XLIII, XLIV, LI, LIII, LIV, LV, LVI, LXIX, LXXIII, LXXVII, LXXXII, LXXXVII, XCVI, CIV, CVI, CVII, CVIII, CXIV, CXV, CXVIII, CXXIV, CXXV, CXXVI, CXXVII, CXXVIII, CXXXI. From *Maud*. "Come into the garden, Maud"; From *The Brook*, \*\*\* lyric stanzas descriptive of the brook; \* *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* (too well-known to be omitted); \*\* *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (beloved of elocutionists, but a good poem, nevertheless); \* *Enoch Arden* (typical of the taste of his day, and some there are who like it still); \*\* *Sea Dreams*; *Milton*; \*\*\* *Break, Break, Break*; *The Higher Pantheism*; From \*\*\* *Idylls of the King*: *The Coming of Arthur*; *Gareth and Lynette*; *Merlin and Vivien*; *Lancelot and Elaine*; *The Holy Grail*; *The Last Tournament*; *Guinevere*; *The Passing of Arthur*. \* *The Revenge*; *The Defence of Lucknow*; *Columbus*; \*\* *De Profundis*; \* *Battle of Brunanburgh* (a translation from old English); *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*; \*\*\* *Crossing the Bar*; \*\*\* *Merlin and the Gleam*; Dramas: \* *Harold*; \*\* *Becket*.

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*Life*: Sir A. C. Lyall. English Men of Letters series. 1902.

*Life*: T. R. Lounsbury. 1915.

*Complete Poems*. Cambridge Poets.

*Poems*. 2 vols. Everyman's Library.

*Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life*: S. A. Brooke, 1894. New ed., 1926.

*Literary Studies*: Walter Bagehot. Vol. II, 1879. "Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning."

*Studies in Literature, 1789-1877*: E. Dowden, 1878. "Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning."

*Corrected Impressions:* G. Saintsbury. 1895.

*Miscellanies:* A. C. Swinburne. 1886. "Tennyson and Musset."

## ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. III.

When Browning published his first poems the general public were frightened away by the charge of obscurity brought against this earlier work. A large part of the general public still believe that Browning is difficult reading. They accord him great prestige, on trust, but declare him "too deep," whatever they may mean by this cryptic phrase. To reassure any readers, therefore, who may have heard this occult saying about Browning, some poems will be suggested that require nothing more than a steady eye to comprehend, and from these the reader may then decide whether to plunge into the depths, or to retreat from the brink.

Unlike their attitude in the case of Tennyson, the younger generation of critics leave Browning alone, except for an occasional lightly dropped sneer at his "complacent optimism."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps there is something in Browning's "depth" that prevents them from rushing in, but he alone escapes from the merry quips showered upon the other Victorians. To do these critics justice, they have marked Browning for oblivion, and hence their silence.

Browning is so strongly individual in style and in his poetry that it is not possible to compare him with any other poet. Such individuality means ultimately either great fame or oblivion: there can be no half-way house for the unique.

The passions and emotions of men and women were the subjects that interested him, together with art and music, in their

<sup>1</sup> Optimism, it must be explained in passing, is the unpardonable sin against the holy spirit of the "intelligentsia." Browning held that it was possible to achieve success through failure; that if a man kept his ideas untarnished his bank account mattered little, and that the reason man is made imperfect is that he may grow.



technical aspects and in their meaning for the souls of men. And of all the emotions, love, particularly love between man and woman, was the supreme and all absorbing one to him, and most worth writing about, for, he held that even art and music are created by, and are but the servants of, love.

His own life in its intimate details, and the profundity of his ideal love for Elizabeth Barrett Browning, he wished above all things to hide from the prying eyes of the world, especially from those individuals who delight to roll gossip over on their tongues with surmises that all is not as it seems. Hence his poems are dramatic in the sense that they are monologues or dialogues by or between characters created by the poet, and placed in situations that are moments of intense emotional crises. In each instance, although his genius creates living men and women, we see his characters strongly coloured by Browning's own individuality. We see them not as they are but as Browning sees them. With an imaginative and psychological insight almost as great as Shakespeare's, Browning does not, like Shakespeare, stand apart from his characters, but is their revealer, so that even when they speak they speak with Browning's voice and very tones, and thus they reveal, too, their creator.

Further, Browning's men and women are Italians of the Renaissance, recreated as an Englishman of the nineteenth century, steeped in the art and literature of Italy, but with a morality of the nineteenth century and not of the quattro cento, sees them. Sometimes they are only masks that but partly hide the face of the real speaker; sometimes they are so universally true to human nature that they might be of any time or place, and therefore are quite probably for all time. But Browning is again unique in this, that he an Englishman is not primarily a poet of England but of an alien land and even of an alien century.

Yet, that Italy and the Italian Renaissance are only masks, although superbly moulded ones, is clear from his definition of his



theory of poetry, which he stated at the age of twenty, in his first and totally neglected poem, *Pauline*:

“And then thou said'st a perfect bard was one  
Who chronicled the stages of all life.”

This definition, with an occasional exception, he did not depart from, and it was in the figures and characters of the Italian Renaissance that he most often found “the stages of all life.” With the true instinct of the dramatist, he knew that one had only to scratch the surface of human nature from China to Peru to find it alike beneath the outward show; and contiguity made his study of Italy appear the obvious but transparent disguise behind which to hide, as he thought he was doing, the intimacies of his own soul.

The reason that, in spite of the mask he held before his own face, he could not hide his soul, was the very reason why he failed as a dramatist for the contemporary stage. It is idle to pretend that \*\* *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, \* *Strafford*, and \*\*\* *In a Balcony*, although all three have been performed, are plays of the theatre. They are not, because in each, the clearly audible voice of Browning, the author, shouts above the lines of his characters. In his dramatic lyrics we welcome him as expositor; on the stage an expositor shatters for us the illusion. This statement, like many other facts in this world, defies logic, for what is true is seldom explicable.

Thus it came about that one of England's greatest dramatists was unable to write a great play, although he wrote several that we *read* (notice that word “read”) with as great pleasure as we ponder the lines of *My Last Duchess*, one of his most dramatic lyrics. It is only the unique artists who are living paradoxes; a lesser man than the artist Browning might have learned the trick of playwriting.

One of the oft-made objections to Browning as a poet is that

he lacks melody, nay, is often harsh in his sound-patterns, and that he does not have as a poetic aim, the creation of beauty. If one compares him with Spenser, or Shelley, or Keats, the charge is true enough. He does not uncritically accept, for instance, the paradox of Keats that "beauty is truth, truth beauty," for Browning's task, as he has set it for himself, is to chronicle life dramatically, through characters in action, and in this work he must record faithfully what he finds, whether it be harsh or beautiful, jarring or melodious, tragic or comic. To find fault with him is to complain that he did not write Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* but did write *Rabbi Ben Ezra*. In other words, Browning is Browning, and not a theory of what poetry ought to be, has been, or could be, but himself. As Browning the reader must take him or leave him. And now for that list of poems!

Personal Poems<sup>1</sup>: \*\*\* *De Gustibus*—; *Home-Thoughts From Abroad*; *My Star*; *By the Fireside*; *Women and Roses*; *How it Strikes a Contemporary*; \*\*\* *One Word More*; *Reading a Book, Under the Cliff*; \*\*\* *Prospice*; \*\*\* *A Face*; \*\*\* *Apparent Failure*; \*\*\* *House*; \*\*\* *Never the Time and the Place*; \*\*\* *Prologue to Asolando*; *Development*; \*\*\* *Epilogue to Asolando*.

Dramatic lyrics: \*\*\* *Cavalier Tunes*; \* *The Lost Leader* (see Browning's note on its reference to Wordsworth); \*\* *How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*; \*\*\* *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*; \*\* *The Laboratory*; \*\*\* *Meeting at Night*; \*\*\* *Parting at Morning*; \* *Evelyn Hope*; \*\*\* *Love Among the Ruins*; \*\* *Up at a Villa—Down in the City*; \* *A Toccata of Galuppi's*; \*\* *Saul*; \* *Any Wife to any Husband*; \* *Two in the Compagna*; *The Guardian-Angel*; \*\*\* *Memorabilia* (on Shelley); \* *Popularity* (on Keats).

Dramatic Romances: \* *Incident of the French Camp*; \*\*\* *The Patriot*; \*\*\* *My Last Duchess*; \* *A Light Woman*; \*\*\* *The Last Ride Together*; \*\*\* *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* ("a child's story"); \* *A Grammarian's Funeral*; \*\*\* *The Statue and the Bust*; \*\*\* *Porphyria's Lover*; \* "*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*."

Men and Women: *Transcendentalism*; \* *Fra Lippo Lippi*; \* *Andrea del Sarto*; \*\*\* *The Bishop Orders his Tomb*.

Dramatis Personæ: *Abt Vogler*; \*\*\* *Rabbi Ben Ezra*; \*\* *A Death in the Desert*; \* *Caliban upon Setebos*; \*\* *Youth and Art*.

From The Ring and the Book: \*\* *Pompilia*.

Dramatic Idyls: \* *Pheidippides*.

Drama, in addition to those already mentioned: \*\*\* *Pippa Passes*; \* *A Soul's Tragedy*.

<sup>1</sup> These personal poems are exceptions to Browning's general rule of hiding his intimate thoughts from the world, and therefore are placed first here to acquaint the reader with the man.



*Life*: G. K. Chesterton. English Men of Letters. 1908.

*Life*: E. Dowden. Everyman's Library.

*The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett*. 2 vols., 1899.

*Complete Poems*. Cambridge Poets.

*Studies in Literature, 1789-1877*: E. Dowden. 1878. "Browning."

*Literary Studies*: W. Bagehot. 3 vols. 1895. "Browning."

*Corrected Impressions*: G. Saintsbury. 1895.

*The Poetry of Robert Browning*: S. A. Brooke. 1902.

*The Early Literary Career of Robert Browning*: T. R. Lounsbury. 1912.

*Browning and His Poetry*: E. Rhys. 1914.

*Browning: How to Know Him*: W. L. Phelps. 1915.

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

Some bold spirit might risk a conjecture why in the history of English literature there are so few women who have been poets or dramatists of any importance. In the novel there are some names, one of undisputed genius, Jane Austen; another, more arguable, George Eliot; and a number of other pleasant women-writers. In thumbing over the literature of any century one sees names of women and titles of poems opposite, but only by the skeleton of a title are they now visible in oblivion's closet. Joanna Baillie, for example, whom Sir Walter Scott, no less, called "the female Shakespeare"; alas, poor Baillie, whose poems once set the passions on a roar, who reads them now? But this is not the place to ask why women have written little great lyric poetry, for the purpose of this page is to make note of one who did, and who was most certainly as well the cause of great poetry in her husband, Elizabeth Barrett, the idolized wife of Robert Browning.

The passionate intensity of Elizabeth Barrett's love for Robert Browning was the cause of her \*\*\* *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, love lyrics of a profound sincerity, beside which many other sonnet sequences of masculine origin seem but indeed poetizing to a mistress' eyebrow. With this key she unlocked her heart for her lover, and before such a revelation a reader feels like an intruder, as if he had come by chance upon letters never meant for his

eyes. The truth must be that the poetry imaged by women is seldom put upon paper; grateful as a reader is for Elizabeth Barrett's sonnets, too much of such intimacy, even in so beautiful a mould, would not do. A woman's naked soul is too terrifying a sight.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*: S. H. Ingram. 1888.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning in Her Letters*: P. Lubbock, 1906. See also bibliography for Robert Browning.

*Poems*: Oxford edition, 1904.

### MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XII, chap. IV.

Nothing could be more absurd than to compare Matthew Arnold with Dr. Samuel Johnson, and yet the very absurdity of the comparison makes it a tempting one. Arnold, at least in academic circles, has become the Great Cham of literary criticism in the nineteenth century, as Johnson was in the eighteenth. Even in poetry, the intellectual despair of Arnold's \*\*\* *Dover Beach* is not more than a century away from the tone of Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, but to go further with this comparison would be to risk excommunication by the hierarchy of the learned in literature. It is safer to change the direct comparison into a distant analogy and say, what Johnson was to criticism in his age, Arnold was in his.

Nineteenth century literature had need for a critic. Coleridge, who had substituted the emotional effect of a work upon the reader as the standard of judgment, had unfortunately been followed by a host who, lacking the greatness of his mind, had babbled unceasingly of their unimportant impressions about this and that—unimportant because many of these writers had no intellects to be impressed. Arnold set out deliberately to make standards for criticism, sure tests and definitions by which literature could be judged, and thus to assure that the conclusions reached by criticism would be based upon clearly stated and pre-



cisely framed principles. As far as it is possible to make such methods of criticism work, Arnold succeeded as a critic. Where he failed, if one dares to say so, was in sometimes leaving out of account what the author under consideration wanted to do, while Arnold was busy examining how he had done it, and comparing how it was done to how others had written. His failure is conspicuous in his attempted estimate of Shelley. In other words, Arnold's methods of criticism work admirably for judgments of all except the exceptional genius who is not like any predecessor.

It is difficult to find specific fault with the general principles of criticism laid down by Arnold, and it must be remembered that these principles have been of great service to criticism: objection can be made only on the ground that they are not as far-reaching in Arnold's practice as they are when stated in his theory.

Briefly, his principles are as follows: a critic is one who makes "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." Arnold emphasizes, rightly, the detachment and disinterestedness of the critic, whose function is "to see the object as it really is," and not to make his criticism serve his own personal ends. This is, however, a counsel of perfection.

Second, the critic must have knowledge of the literature of his own country, and at least the knowledge of one other great literature. Arnold's own knowledge included, besides English literature, a familiarity with Greek, Roman, and French literatures, together with a minute study of Dante and Goethe.

The method to be followed by the critic in examining poetry he states in these words: "There can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us the most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry. Of course we are not to require this other poetry to resemble them: it may be very dis-

similar." Nevertheless, these touchstones when used with tact will be "infallible means for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality."

Finally, the value of poetry is in its idea. "The greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life—to the question: How to live." The function of poetry is, therefore, to serve as a criticism of life. "More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry."

From the criticism of literature Arnold turned to the criticism of political and social problems of contemporary life. Ideals of living he had already declared to be the purpose of poetry to inculcate, hence it was but a step for him to consider morality in its broader aspects as applied to politics, religion, and society in its whole structure. He believed that society could be regenerated by Culture, using this word in its true and broad sense. The word has of late fallen into disrepute because it has been so often, since Arnold's time, upon the lips of the ignorant and the half-baked. The aim of Culture, he said, is "to know ourselves and the world," and, "as the means to this end, to know the best which has been thought and said in the world." Culture "moves by the force not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good." The goal toward which it moves, he stated in the words of Bishop Wilson, is "to make reason and the will of God prevail."

Arnold's poetry has been left for final mention, although most of it was composed before he began his work as a critic. It is poetry the quality of which does not deeply move the present generation. It is intellectual, literary, as carefully built as his criticism, perfect in technique but lacking in spontaneity, in any



"overflowing of the emotions." One reads it coolly, critically, detached, but without enthusiasm. On the other hand, it is not without interest because it lacks fire, for it is the human record, in the personal poems, of a man struggling with doubts barring his way to spiritual peace. In other aspects his poetry is a very pure reflection of the Greek authors who were his constant spiritual companions all his life. Yet even the poetry that is the record of his mental conflict with doubt is expressed with calm and quiet. Intellect triumphed over emotional rhapsody, as his Stoic masters had taught him it should.

Prose readings suggested: \*\*\* *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* (1865); \*\*\* *The Study of Poetry* (1888); \* *Marcus Aurelius* (1865); \*\*\* *Wordsworth* (1888); \* *Shelley* (1888); \*\* *Emerson* (1888). From *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Chap. I (on culture—sweetness and light); chap. III (on barbarians, Philistines, and populace). \*\* *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867).

Poems: *Quiet Work*; \*\* *Shakespeare*; \*\* *The Forsaken Merman*; \*\*\* *Self-Dependence*; \* *The Buried Life*; \*\* *Westminster Abbey*; *A Summer Night*; *The Future*; \*\*\* *The Scholar-Gypsy*; \*\*\* *Thyrsis* (a monody to the author's friend, Arthur Hugh Clough); \*\*\* *Dover Beach*; \* *Austerity of Poetry*; \* *The Last Word*; \*\*\* *Rugby Chapel*; *Heine*.

Narrative poem: \*\*\* *Sohrab and Rustum* (his most popular poem).

*Life*: H. W. Paul. English Men of Letters series, 1902.

*Life*: G. W. E. Russell, 1904.

*Letters*: Ed. by G. W. E. Russell, 2 vols., 1901.

*Essays, Literary and Critical*. Everyman's Library.

*Essays in Criticism*, \*\* *On Translating Homer*. Oxford Standard Authors.

*On the Study of Celtic Literature*. Everyman's Library.

*Poems*. Everyman's Library.

*Poems*. Ed. by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch, 1909.

*Four Victorian Poets*: S. A. Brooke, 1908 (Clough, Arnold, Rossetti, Morris).

*Victorian Prose Masters*: W. C. Brownell, 1902. "Matthew Arnold."

*Matthew Arnold and his Relation to the Thought of our Time*: W. H. Dawson, 1904.

*Corrected Impressions*: G. Saintsbury, 1895.

*Essays and Studies*: A. C. Swinburne, 1875.

*Matthew Arnold, How to Know Him*: S. P. Sherman, 1917.

## ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819-1861)

Clough was the intimate friend and close associate of Matthew Arnold at Rugby and Oxford, and like Arnold, was a poet. Clough's comparatively early death<sup>1</sup> prevented his poetical

<sup>1</sup> See M. Arnold's poem *Thyrsis*.

powers from reaching their full fruition, but the poetry he did write deserves a better resting place than in the limbo of an anthology of minor poetry. But it is probably useless to hope that the general reader will care for more than one or two of his poems. Try these: *The Latest Decalogue*; \*\*\* *Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth*; *Dipsychus*; \* *Hope Evermore and Believe*; \*\*\* *Qui Laborat, Orat*; \*\* *Songs in Absence*; \* *Come, Poet, Come!*; \*\*\* *All is Well*.

*Poems*: Ed. by C. Whibley, 1913.

### DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882)

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. v.

Rossetti, painter and poet, was one of the founders, with a group of young artists and writers, of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. The term Pre-Raphaelite was chosen to proclaim the aim of their art, namely, to return to the simplicity of the medieval painters before the time of Raffaele. This search for simplicity and the direct imitation of nature they expected to follow in all their artistic work, literature as well as painting and design. Later the group was increased by having associated with it other notable men, in particular Sir Edward Burne-Jones, the painter, and William Morris,<sup>1</sup> poet and writer of prose romances.

Rossetti was a mystic, romantic dreamer, and the Pre-Raphaelite creed of simplicity and the accurate imitation of nature could not impose its limitations on his mind. Religion and love were to him ecstasies of the æsthetic soul, expressible only in transcendent visions. Not all of his poetry belongs either to the mystic or the "fleshly" kind, to quote an adjective hurled at all the group, and may be read without any special preparation for the ordeal. His poetry shows the influence of Keats, in its exactness of visual presentation, but the best of it walks alone.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 346.



Of late the whole Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood have passed behind a cloud of changing taste, not that Rossetti was ever a man widely acclaimed by the public. To-day, however, Pre-Raphaelitism seems almost an artistic curiosity, a far-off and forgotten thing, made up of compositions in stained glass, with all the colours pastel shades, painted lilies, and souls like thin flames.

This is a grossly unfair attitude toward a movement not only important in its own day but one that did much for all the arts, with the possible exception of literature. There, it is true, the Pre-Raphaelite case is at its weakest, that is, as we see its poems and romances from our twentieth century. The medievalism of this end-of-the-century romantic movement, in its literary aspects, is weaker than the medievalism at the beginning of 1800. Coleridge, Keats, Scott overshadow hopelessly Rossetti and William Morris. Perhaps Pre-Raphaelitism was too self-conscious, too much a propaganda for æsthetic beauty to suffuse its creative writing with a careless rapture. Do not let us forget, though, that Oscar Wilde and the Pre-Raphaelites among them stripped our drawing-room chairs of the antimacassars.

If the general reader can be persuaded to approach Rossetti, not as a literary curiosity but as a poet with some beautiful and some moving things to say, he will enjoy the experience of the contact. It is, on the other hand, hopeless to encounter Rossetti when one is feeling "practical." He can reach only those willing to surrender to his beauty and sincerity; he must not be argued with. A man may be less than Keats and still do much for us.

These are some of Rossetti's poems; \*\*\* *The Blessed Damozel*; \* *Sister Helen*; \*\*\* *Sudden Light*; \*\* *A Little While*; \*\*\* *Troy Town*; \*\*\* *The House of Life* (a sonnet sequence); \*\* *The Cloud Confines*; \*\*\* *Five English Poets: Thomas Chatterton, William Blake, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley*; \*\*\* *The King's Tragedy* (James I of Scotland, 20 February, 1437).

*Life*: A. C. Benson. English Men of Letters series, 1904.

*Poetical Works*: Ed. by W. M. Rossetti, 1904.

*Appreciations*: W. Pater, 1889. "Rossetti."

*A Study of Clough, Arnold, Rossetti and Morris:* S. A. Brooke, 1908.

*Essays and Studies:* A. C. Swinburne, 1875.

*Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood:* H. Hunt. 2 vols., 1905.

### WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

William Morris was a Don Quixote with the heart of a lion and the imagination of Apollo. Early in his life he came under the influence of D. G. Rossetti,<sup>1</sup> although his own interest in medievalism began when he was a boy, but Rossetti gave Morris the impulse to give up the career he had planned and to turn to art. The result was that through the work of William Morris a complete revolution was achieved in architecture, interior decorating, and all the other domestic arts. This is not the place to discuss this phase of the accomplishments of William Morris, nor those of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Walter Crane, William de Morgan, and of others associated with Morris in decoration, printing, tapestry-weaving, stained glass, and the other manifold activities of the firm of William Morris and Company, an organization that may be called the incorporation, for practical æsthetic purposes, of the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

William Morris added to all these arts and crafts, in many of which he was profoundly skilled and inspired (for the world has known no such multi-minded man since Leonardo da Vinci), a belief in an artistic Socialism, more his own than an orthodox brand, and a gift (not a genius but distinctly a gift), for the writing of poetry and prose romances.

His faith in Socialism has been a barrier between him and his recognition by the public, as Rousseauism, Godwinism, and French revolutionism made the early nineteenth century poets anathema to their generation. We have to believe a man's politics ancient history before we can think him a poet. We can read Shelley because we have forgotten Godwin; but Karl Marx<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> The author of the Socialist Bible—*Das Kapital*.



is still with us, and Morris, consequently, still suspect. In another hundred years, when our nightmare terrors of Socialism have been forgotten, we shall appreciate what Morris did, even if we continue to smile at his good-intentioned politics, as we now smile at Shelley's.

There is an amazing amount of good reading in Morris, if only the reader will bring himself to overlook the fact that Morris was a Socialist. And his works may be read even by the youngest mind without danger of contamination from heretical doctrine, for the best of Morris, in his writings, prose or verse, is poetry and not politics, for even his politics become poetry in his mind. There is not a bogey capable of frightening a bank president in all his books rolled into one. If a reader should happen by chance upon a disturbing idea, he has only to remember that the idea is not "practical," and hence no harm can follow from meeting it.

Poems which are good for a reader, in any sense of the adjective: \* *The Chapel in Lyonesse*; \*\*\* *The Defence of Guenevere* (these are interesting to compare with Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*); \*\*\* *The Eve of Crécy*; \*\*\* *Sir Giles' War-Song*; \*\*\* *Prologue to the Earthly Paradise*; From *The Earthly Paradise*: *The Lovers of Gudrun* and *The Ring given to Venus*; \*\* *L'Envoi to the Earthly Paradise*; \*\* *Love is Enough*; \*\*\* *The Voice of Toil*; \* *No Master*; \*\*\* *The Day Is Coming* (a word of caution, the last three are revolutionary songs); \*\* *The Burghers' Battle*.

Prose romances, almost entirely forgotten to-day: \*\*\* *The Sundering Flood* (Publ. 1897); \*\* *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* (Publ. 1897); \* *The Wood Beyond the World* (1894).

Retold tales: \*\*\* *Old French Romances* (1896).

William Morris' vision of Utopia: \*\*\* *News from Nowhere* (1891).

Essays: \*\*\* *Hopes and Fears for Art* (1882).

*Life*: Alfred Noyes. English Men of Letters series, 1908.

\*\*\* *Life*: T. W. Mackail, 2 vols., 1899.

A "classic" biography.

*Collected Works*. 1911.

*William Morris, His Work and Influence*: A. Clutton-Brock, 1897.

*William Morris, A Critical Study*: J. Drinkwater, 1912.

See also bibliography under Rossetti.

## ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909)

Swinburne's first published verse was dedicated to Rossetti, and thus he proclaimed his friendship for Pre-Raphaelitism.

Although he was too individual in his own work to be an ally, he remained always a friendly associate of the movement. The main ingredients in Swinburne's poetry, in his early youth, were the Elizabethan dramatists and a fervent enthusiasm for Victor Hugo. To these he added a Shelley-like ideal republicanism and a violent anti-clerical prejudice. By this time, the reader will easily see, the compound he had succeeded in making was one that would successfully guard him against any risk of becoming a popular writer.

Young men wildly acclaimed Swinburne's poetry, but their fathers, and their uncles, and their aunts—particularly, their aunts—wondered what the new generation was coming to, and went on reading Tennyson. Swinburne, like Shelley, was not respectable reading.

The young men were right in recognizing that one of the best qualities in Swinburne's poetry was the exuberant spirit of youth. His early poetry is by far his best, although one hesitates to agree entirely with Sir Edmund Gosse's dictum that "before his fortieth year there had set in a curious ossification of Swinburne's intellect." If his intellect was ossified, some of the bones were still capable of taking a very high polish. Sir Edmund, it should be added, has more definitely in mind Swinburne, the critic, in making this charge.

"Sound without sense" was one of the charges made against Swinburne's poetry, a charge that was true when Swinburne failed, but did not hold against his best. Poetry, he conceived, as primarily rhythm and melody, the rhythm and melody being mediums for passion, and no poet has ever been more subtle and skillful in modulations of rhythm and melody to correspond with the emotion behind the verses.

The true tragedy of Swinburne's genius was that he had very little to say, and repeated that little over and over again. Ideal republicanism, praise of Victor Hugo, pantheistic atheism (if



the contradiction in terms may be permitted), ecstasies of earthly love, the sea and all the elemental forces of nature, hatred of priests and creeds, a fervent patriotism, these were his main stock in trade, uttered in torrents of words, but with metrical skill, variety, and subtlety beyond the technical capacity of all but a few poets. Strangest paradox of all, his language was strongly coloured by that of the *Old Testament*, and the man who proclaimed that the world had grown grey with the breath of the pale Galilean nevertheless spoke often in tones borrowed from the Prophets.

It is impossible to read Swinburne without catching some of his enthusiasm and there lies his secret. One becomes intoxicated with his rhythms and his melodies, the world grows dark about one, strange sights and colours dance before one's eyes, the music swells to such ecstasies of sound one forgets to ask, or does not care to know, if there is any meaning in the intellectual sense of this word. One cannot argue while partaking of the Eleusinian mysteries. The vision is enough; the risk is in trying to evoke it too often, for then it will not come. That is why Swinburne did not go beyond his early work—he had nothing new to offer.

The same qualities of exuberant enthusiasms and violent prejudices, strong emotions strongly expressed, are found in his criticism. With an amazing background of reading, and an accurately tuned sensitiveness to poetry, he is extraordinarily stimulating reading, in his function as critic, but wholly untrustworthy. Enthusiasms and prejudices are alike exaggerated, and sometimes he finds cause for enthusiasm where more lack-lustre eyed readers find only dullness. He is a critic to be read, but to be believed only with many mental reservations.

Out of the vast body of his poetry, the reader is advised to begin with these, the more or less stock suggestions: Choruses from *Atlanta in Calydon*: \*\*\* *When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces*; \*\*\* *Before the beginning of years*; \* *We have seen thee, O Love*; \*\* *Not as with sundering of the earth*; \*\*\* *Hymn to Proserpine* (Thou has conquered, O Galilean); \*\* *A Match*; \*\*\* *A Ballad of*

*Burdens*; \* *In Memory of Walter Savage Landor*; \*\*\* *The Garden of Proserpine*; \*\*\* *Dedication to Poems and Ballads*, 1st series; \*\* *An Appeal*; \* *The Pilgrims*; \*\*\* *To Walt Whitman in America*; \*\*\* *Cor Cordium* (Shelley); \*\*\* *The Oblation*; \*\*\* *A Forsaken Garden*; \*\*\* *A Ballad of François Villon*; \*\*\* *Triads*; \* *On the Deaths of Thomas Carlyle and George Eliot*; \*\*\* *William Shakespeare*; \*\*\* *Children*.

Supplementary suggestions, poems: \*\*\* *Hertha*; *On A Country Road* (Chaucer); *The Armada*; *Christopher Marlowe*; \*\*\* *The Triumph of Time*; *Laus Veneris*; \*\*\* *Tristram of Lyonesse* (compare with Tennyson's *The Last Tournament*); *Mater Dolorosa* (France, 1871); \*\*\* *On the Death of Robert Browning*.

Dramas: *Trilogy on Mary, Queen of Scots—Chastelard, Bothwell, Mary Stuart*; *The Queen Mother* (Catherine de' Medici); *Rosamond* (Fair Rosamund).

Prose (criticism): \*\*\* *A Study of Shakespeare*; *Essays and Studies*; *Miscellanies*.

See biographies of the poets for references to these.

*Life*: Sir E. Gosse. 1912.

*Complete Works*. 11 vols., 1904-6.

*Selected Poems*: Ed., by W. M. Payne. Belles Lettres series. 1905.

*Swinburne's Poems and Ballads, A Criticism*: W. M. Rossetti. 1866.

*Corrected Impressions*: G. Saintsbury. 1895.

*Swinburne, An Estimate*: J. Drinkwater. 1913.

### Lesser Poets (First Half of 19th Century)

Below are grouped a handful of lesser poets who yet have written a few poems that we remember, perhaps because they were read aloud to us as children. These poets lie outside the main current of great literature, but for all that it will do us no harm to glance again at their verse, if only to note that often the dividing line between the great and the less is only the breadth of a hair, a division very puzzling to readers capable of simple pleasures and easily stirred emotions.

#### Richard Harris Barham (1788-1845).

\* *The Ingolsby Legends*, 1840. Second and third series, 1847.

Fortunate is the childhood that has heard these legends, and pleasant the age that looks back to them.

*The Ingolsby Legends*. Oxford Standard Authors.

#### Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849).

A strange fantastic imagination, a decadent Elizabethan soul caged by the intellect of a modern scientist, his unfinished drama *Death's Jest Book, or The Fool's Tragedy* (1859) is able to



move deeply a reader who finds himself in the mood for this sort of thing. On the other hand his poem *To Shelley, Written in a Blank Leaf of the Prometheus Unbound*, deserves mention.

**Thomas Campbell (1777-1844).**

Campbell's poetry was admired by Byron. Three patriotic poems are representative of Campbell's best: \*\* *Ye Mariners of England* (1801); *The Battle of the Baltic* (1809); \* *Hohenlinden* (1802).

*The Last Man* (1823) is interesting for its subject. American readers will find the dullness of *Gertrude of Wyoming, a Pennsylvanian Tale* (1809) lightened for them by several unconsciously humorous passages. In his own day, Campbell's fame rested mainly upon *Pleasures of Hope* (1799). His *Poems*, edited by J. C. Robertson, are in Oxford Standard Authors.

**Hartley Coleridge (1796-1849).**

The son of the author of *The Ancient Mariner* led a literary life of almost tragic failure after the promise of his youth. He has, however, left some sonnets: *Homer*; \* *Shakespeare*; *Prayer*.

**James Hogg (The Ettrick Shepherd) (1770-1835).** *Donald MacGillivray*.

**Thomas Hood (1799-1845).**

Hood raises the old but always interesting question why so many humourists are sentimentalists, or if one resents the adjective "sentimental" as applied to Hood's serious poems, why it is that a sense of humour usually lies close to a sensitiveness to human suffering. Not every reader, however, cares for his humour, but by way of experiment the following specimens of his nonsense are worth trying:

*Faithless Sally Brown; Faithless Nelly Gray; Sally Simpkin's Lament.*

Charles Lamb justly admired \* *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, and for others of Hood's more serious vein there is the grim murder melodrama of \*\* *The Dream of Eugene Aram*, and the truly famous \*\* *The Song of the Shirt* and \* *The Bridge of Sighs*. *The Song* strikes a true note of pathos in its protest against the

misery of sweat-shop labour. *The Bridge* deals with sympathetic tenderness the social problems of the outcast woman, a problem that in Hood's day was not so usually treated.

Other poems suggested: *Fair Ines*; *Ruth*; *False Poets and True* (to Wordsworth);

\* *It was the Time of Roses*.

*Poems*. Oxford Standard Authors. 1911.

*Poems*: Ed. by A. Ainger. 2 vols. 1897

### Thomas Moore (1779-1852).

Among the lesser poets of the first half of the nineteenth century (lesser, that is, according to our present critical standards) Moore was certainly the most popular, nor has that popularity entirely deserted him, since his *Irish Melodies* appear to be fixtures in our song-books. In his own day he was seriously compared with Scott and Byron. To-day we remember \* *The Last Rose of Summer*; \* *Oft in the Stilly Night*; *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*; *Dear Harp of my Country*; and other favourites from the *Melodies*. There is something in his poetry, if not greatness, that can stir the emotions of several generations. It is, however, the songs that survive; we read no longer *Lalla Rookh* (1817), the poem for which his contemporaries acclaimed him.

His prose works include a life of R. B. Sheridan, the dramatist, but most important of all \*\* *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of his Life*, 1830. Moore was an intimate friend of Lord Byron. It was to Moore that Byron bequeathed his memoirs, which Moore committed to the flames without publishing them.

*Life*: S. Gwynn. (English Men of Letters Series.) 1905; *Complete Poems*. Oxford Standard Authors.

Fitzgerald, Edward: *The 101 Quatrains of Omar Khayam*, Lond. & N. Y.

In addition to the authors given more extended comment, the following are suggested because of a poem or two each is remembered by.

Robert Stephen Hawker (1804-1873). *To Alfred Tennyson* (1859).

Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835). *England's Dead* (1822); *The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England* (1826); *The Homes of England* (1827).



- Bryan Waller Procter, pseud. Barry Cornwall (1787-1874). *The Sea* (1832); *The Hunter's Song* (1832).
- William Mackworth Praed (1802-1839). *The Red Fisherman*; *The Season*; *The Vicar*.
- Hartley Coleridge (1796-1849). *She is not fair to outward view* (1833); *November* (1833); \* *To Shakespeare* (1833).
- Allan Cunningham (1784-1842). *The Lovely Lass of Preston Mill* (1813); *A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea* (1825).
- James Smith (1775-1839), and Horatio Horace Smith (1779-1849) in \* *Rejected Addresses* have left an exceedingly clever and amusing series of parodies of Byron, Scott, and Southey.

## LESSER POETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY SECOND HALF

### GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*: Ed. by A. H. Miles, new enlarged ed., 12 vols. 1905-7. Biographies and representative selections including the lesser poets.
- The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*: Sir A. Quiller-Couch. 1912. (Landor to Abercrombie.)
- Victorian Verse*: Selected by Percival and Andrews. 1923.
- A Victorian Anthology, 1837-1895*: E. C. Stedman. 1894.
- The Cambridge Book of Lesser Poets*: J. C. Squire. 1927.
- The Golden Treasury*: F. T. Palgrave. Second series. New ed., 1924.

### INDIVIDUAL POETS

- Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904). \* *The Light of Asia* (1879).
- Alfred Austin (1835-1913). *Songs of England* (1900).
- William Edmonstoune Ayrton (1813-1864). \*\* *The Book of Ballads*, edited by "Bon Gaultier" [pseud.] (1845). (Wit combined with scholarship.)
- Wilfrid Scaven Blunt (1849-1922). *Love Sonnets of Proteus* (1875).
- Rupert Chawner Brooke (1887-1915). \*\*\* *Poems*, collected ed.
- Robert Buchanan (1841-1901). *Balder, the Beautiful* (1877).
- Charles Stuart Calverley (1831-1884). \* *Verses and Translations*. Edition of 1905.
- Hubert Crackanthorpe (d. 1897). *Last Studies* (1897).
- John Davidson (1857-1909). \*\* *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1895) and a second series of *Fleet Eclogues* (1896).
- Lord De Tabley (1835-1895). *Collected Poems* (1903).
- Aubrey Thomas De Vere (1814-1902). *Poetical Works* (1884).
- Austin Dobson (1840-1921). \* *When Burbadge Played* (1888). \*\* *Lyrics and Ballads*.
- Ernest Dowson (1867-1900). \* *Poems*. Ed. of 1905.
- James Elbroy Flecker (d. 1915). \*\*\* *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* (1913).
- Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883). \*\*\* *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*.
- William Schenck Gilbert (1836-1911). *The Bab Ballads*.
- William Ernest Henley (1849-1903). \*\*\* *London Voluntaries* (1893); *Hawthorne and Lavender* (1899); \*\*\* *In Hospital* (1903). *Works*, 7 vols. 1908.
- Jean Ingelow (1820-1897). *Poems*, Ed. of 1903.

Lionel Pigot Johnson (1867-1902). *Selections* (1908).

John Keble (1792-1866) \*\* *The Christian Year*. Everyman's Library.

Andrew Lang (1844-1912). Author of many ballads and delightful light verse.

Frederick Locker-Lampson (1821-1895). \* *London Lyrics* (1857). Ed. of 1904.  
(Clever verses about Society).

Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy (1844-1881). \*\* *Lays of France* (1872).  
(An adaptation of the medieval lays of Marie de France).

Coventry Patmore (1823-1896). \*\* *The Angel in the House* (1854-6). *The Unknown Eros* (1877).

Stephen Phillips (1866-1915). *Lyrics*. Ed. of 1913. See also under Drama.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) \*\* *Goblin Market*. \*\* *Winter Rain*. \*\* *Sleep at Sea*.

William Sharp (pseud. Fiona Macleod) (1855-1905). *Selected Writings*. Ed. of 1905.

James Thomson (1834-1882). *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874).

Francis Thompson (1859-1907). *The Hand of Heaven* (1891).

Walter Theodore Watts-Dunton (1832-1914). *The Coming of Love* (1898). *Christmas at the Mermaid* (1902).

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900). \*\* *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*.

## Nineteenth-Century Drama

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIII, chap. VIII.

The drama during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century sank to a low ebb in part because the period was an era of great novels, because of copyright difficulties which were against the interests of English dramatists (novels and French plays could be adapted without infringement of authors' rights), and because the theatre was no longer visited by the educated classes. It was not until Oscar Wilde wrote his comedies in the eighties that an interest in the drama as a department of literature was revived. Then followed the translation of the dramas of Ibsen, and their performance upon the English stage. The influence of Ibsen proved potent in recreating the English drama. The close of the century saw the stage in a great measure restored to its former position of dignity among the arts, aided as the theatre was by the genius of George Bernard Shaw.

The list of dramas and dramatists that follows contains very little "good reading." The best that can be said for many of these plays is that they were great successes in their own day,



and some of them have at least the entertaining qualities of literary curiosities.

## GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- About the Theatre*: W. Archer. 1886.  
*English Dramatists of To-Day*: W. Archer. 1882.  
 \*\* *Old Drama and the New*: W. Archer. 1923.  
 \* *History of the London Stage and Its Famous Players, 1576-1903*: H. B. Baker. 1903.  
*The Lyceum and Henry Irving*: A. Brereton. 1903.  
*A Book of the Play*: Dutton Cook. 1881.  
*Hours with the Players*: Dutton Cook. 2 vols., 1881.  
 \*\*\* *The English Stage; an Account of the Victorian Drama*: A. Filon. Transl. from the French, 1897.  
*Ibsen in England*: M. A. Franc. 1919.  
 \*\*\* *The Eighteen Nineties*: Holbrook Jackson. 1914.  
*Theatrical Notes*: J. Knight. 1893.  
 \*\*\* *An Essay on Comedy*: George Meredith.  
*The Journal of a London Playgoer, 1851-1866*: Henry Morley. 1866. New ed. 1891.  
*The English Stage, Its Origins and Modern Development*: D. E. Oliver. 1912.  
*The Drama of Yesterday and To-Day*: Clement Scott. 2 vols., 1899.  
 \*\*\* *Dramatic Opinions and Essays*: G. B. Shaw. New ed. 1906.  
*The Diaries of William Charles Macready, 1833-1851*: W. Toynbee. 2 vols. 1912.  
 \* *Playhouse Impressions*: A. B. Walkeley. 1892.  
 \* *Drama and Life*: A. B. Walkeley. 1908.  
 \* *Sheridan to Robertson*: E. B. Watson. 1926.  
*The Growth of the English Drama*: A. Wynne. 1914.  
*Annals of Covent Garden Theatre*: H. S. Wyndham. 1905.

## PLAYWRIGHTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

- See also notes and bibliographies on the nineteenth century poets.  
 C. H. Coghlan. *A Quiet Rubber* (1867). Adapted from the French.  
 Dion Boucicault (1820?-1890). \* *London Assurance*. 1841.  
*London Assurance* is an early experiment in realistic comedy.  
 Sir W. S. Gilbert (1836-1911). \* *Pygmalion and Galatea* (1871); \*\*\* *Engaged* (1877).  
*Original Plays*, collected edition, rptd., 1911.  
*Engaged* is an amusing specimen of the Gilbertian humour of unromantic motives.  
 Sydney Grundy (1848-1914). \* *A Pair of Spectacles* (1890). Adapted from the French. *Sowing the Wind* (1893).  
*A Pair of Spectacles* is a sentimental comedy that acts well, if one believes in a rose-pink world.  
 St. John Hankin (1869-1909). \* *The Cassilis Engagement* (1907).  
 Douglas William Jerrold (1803-1857). *Black Ey'd Susan* (1829).  
 A nautical melodrama.  
 James Sheridan Knowles (1784-1862). \* *Virginus* (1820); *The Hunchback* (1832).  
*Virginus* is one of the best attempts to write "practical" poetic drama in this age.

Leopold David Lewis (1828-1890). \* *The Bells* (1871). Adapted from the French. The famous melodrama which provided a "star" role for Sir Henry Irving. Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873). *The Lady of Lyons* (1839); \* *Richelieu, or the Conspiracy* (1839); *Money* (1840).

*Richelieu* is the only one of these that can be read with patience.

William Thomas Moncrieff (1794-1857). *Tom and Jerry, or Life in London* (1821).

A dramatization of Pierce Egan's *The Life of an Actor*.

John Maddison Morton (1811-1891). \* *Box and Cox* (1847).

A famous farce still beloved of amateur players.

Stephen Phillips (1866-1915). \*\* *Paolo and Francesca* (1900); *Faust*, with J. Comyns Carr (1908).

*Paolo and Francesca* is a pale version in verse compounded of Tennysonian and Shakespearean imitations, but is representative of the literary movement of the last decade.

John Poole (1786?-1872). *Paul Pry* (1825).

A famous character farce.

Thomas William Robertson (1829-1871). \*\* *Caste* (1867).

\*\* *Caste* is an attempt to return to natural, simple stories of every day life.

Its theme is that "kind hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith than Norman blood."

James Palgrave Simpson \* *A Scrap of Paper* (1861). Adapted from the French (Sardou).

A typical example of the prevalent adaptations but a good acting play.

B. C. Stephenson and Clement Scott. \* *Diplomacy* (1878). Adapted from the French (Sardou).

Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795-1854). Another of the same. *Ion* (1850).

*Ion* belongs to the heavy verse-drama experiments.

Tom Taylor (1817-1880). *Still Waters Run Deep* (1855); \* *The Ticket-of-Leave Man* (1863).

\* *The Ticket-of-Leave Man* is not bad detective melodrama of the hero-with-a-heart-of-gold type.

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900). \*\*\* *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892). A brilliantly clever but sentimental society comedy; *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), a farce of the highest rank in its kind.

William Gorman Wills (1828-1891). \* *Charles The First* (1873); *Faust* (1886).

*Charles I* and *Faust* were famous mediums for the acting of Sir Henry Irving.

Cromwell is not a hero to W. G. Wills.

\*\*\* *Representative British Dramas, Victorian and Modern*: Ed. by M. J. Moses. 1918. (Contains twenty-one plays from 1820 to 1913).

*Contemporary Plays*: T. H. Dickinson and Jack R. Crawford. 1926. (Plays from 1900 to 1923).

For other dramas of the nineteenth century poets, see sections on these writers. Contemporary dramatists are excluded by the plan of the book.

### THEATRICAL MEMOIRS

The nineteenth century was a period of great actors, if not of great dramas, and therefore the theatrical memoirs are often more interesting reading than the plays.

*The Bancrofts; Recollections of Sixty Years*: Sir Squire and Lady Bancroft. 1909.



- Forty Years on the Stage*: J. H. Barnes. 1914.  
*Rutland Barrington*: By Himself, with a preface by W. S. Gilbert. 1908.  
*Herbert Beerbohm Tree*: Max Beerbohm. 1921.  
*Sir Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry*: W. Calvert. 1897.  
*Life and Life-Work of Samuel Phelps*: J. Forbes-Robertson and W. M. Phelps. 1886.  
*From Studio to Stage*: W. Grossmith. 1913.  
*The Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean*: J. W. Cole. 2 vols. 1859.  
*Players and Playwrights I Have Known*: J. Coleman. 2 vols. 1888.  
*Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi*: Charles Dickens. New ed., 1903.  
*Sir Henry Irving*: P. H. Fitzgerald. 1906.  
*Gaiety Chronicles*: John Hollingshead. 1898.  
*Dramatic Portraits*: P. P. Howe. 1913.  
*Helen Faucit—Lady Martin*: Sir Theodore Martin. 1900.  
*The Kendals*: T. E. Pemberton. 1900.  
*The Story of My Life*: Ellen Terry. 1908.

## The Growth of Science

- History of the Inductive Sciences*: W. Whewell. 3 vols., 3rd ed., 1857.  
*An Introduction to the History of Science*: W. Libby.  
 \*\* *From the Greeks to Darwin*: H. F. Osborn.  
 \*\* *A Short History of Science*: W. T. Sedgwick and H. W. Tyler.  
 \*\*\* *The Wonderful Century, its Success and its Failures*: A. R. Wallace. 1898.  
 \* *The Outline of Science*: Ed. by J. A. Thomson. 4 vols.  
 \*\* *Pioneers of Science*: Sir Oliver Lodge.  
*A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*: A. D. White.  
*Electricity and Magnetism*: D. W. Turner. 1927.  
 A description for the general reader of the main developments in electrical science as far as the end of the nineteenth century.  
*The Growth of Science in the Nineteenth Century*: Sir Michael Foster, 1899.  
 Address at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.  
 \* *Britain's Heritage of Science*: A. Schuster and A. E. Shipley. 1917.  
 A biographical survey of English scientists from Roger Bacon to the date of issue, with an account of their work in various fields. Excellent general reference book.  
 \* *Interpreters of Nature*: Sir G. Newman. 1927.  
 \* *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*. A collective work. 2nd ed., 1927.

## READINGS IN THE LITERATURE OF SCIENCE

See also sections on Darwin, Huxley and Tyndall.

Michael Faraday (1791–1867). *Experimental Researches in Electricity*. Everyman's Library.

*The Life of Faraday*: J. H. Gladstone. 1872.

Sir Charles Lyell (1797–1875): *The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man*. Everyman's Library.

Lyall championed Darwin's theory of evolution in this book. It is probable, according to J. W. Judd, that Lyell's earlier work *Principles of Geology* contributed to the formulation of Darwin's theory.

## 358 What to Read in English Literature

*James Watt and the Steam Engine*: H. W. Dickenson and Rhys Jenkins. 1927.  
Hugh Miller (1802-1856). *The Old Red Sandstone*. Everyman's Library.

### GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Classics of Modern Science* (Copernicus to Pasteur): W. S. Knickerbocker. 1927.

A representative list of readable selections from many important scientists.

*Lives of the Engineers*: Samuel Smiles. 5 vols., 1874.

*The History of the Study of Medicine in the British Isles*: N. Moore. 1908.

See also titles in The Master of Medicine series.

*Impressions of Great Naturalists*: H. F. Osborn. 1924. (Wallace, Darwin, Huxley, Pasteur, and others.)

## Nineteenth Century Philosophy

Suggested readings:

Grant Allen (1848-1799). *The Evolution of the Idea of God*. 1897.

Walter Bagehot (1826-1877). *Physics and Politics* (1869).

Alexander Bain (1818-1903). *Autobiography*. 1904.

John Caird (1820-1898). *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*. 1880.

Alexander Campbell Fraser (1819-1914). *Biographia Philosophica*. 1904.

Harriet Martineau (1802-1856). *The Positive Philosophy of August Conte*. 1853.

John Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872). *Lectures on Social Morality*. 1872.

Robert Owen (1771-1858). *Life of Robert Owen*. Written by Himself. 1857.  
Only the first volume published.

David Ricardo (1772-1823). *Principals of Political Economy and Taxation*. 1817.

Francis Herbert Bradley. *Ethical Studies*. 2nd. ed., 1927. An attack upon Utilitarianism.

### NINETEENTH CENTURY PHILOSOPHY—GENERAL

*The Development of English Thought in the Nineteenth Century. 1800-1860*: V. F. Storr. 1913.

*History of English Utilitarianism*: E. Albee. 1902.

*Biographical History of Philosophy*: G. H. Lewes (1845-6).

*A Study of British Genius*: H. Ellis. 1927.

## HERBERT SPENCER (1820-1903)

Spencer applied Darwin's theory of evolution as a cornerstone for a whole superstructure of philosophy. The general label the world has pasted beside his name is the philosopher of evolution. Technically, his work is known as the synthetic philosophy.



Knowledge of natural phenomena, he held, would in time be coördinated, *i.e.*, fused into one comprehensive system which he called "the knowable." Every discovery and every established theory contributed to the bulk of the knowable. The reason why we think to-day of the sciences as separate fields of thought is because our knowledge of them is not as yet complete enough to effect the fusion of such fields of knowledge as we possess into one universal whole—the knowable. Philosophy thus becomes science, and evolution the key to the universal explanation of the gradual discovery, step by step, of the knowable.

Beyond the field of the knowable lies the "unknowable," the region not only of metaphysics, but of as yet undiscovered knowables. Every increment of scientific knowledge diminishes the extent of the unknowable, but there will always remain a residuum for which the symbol  $x$  is as convenient a label as Spencer's term "the unknowable." In this region of ultimate reality behind the reach of our finite knowledge one may postulate the inclusion, to be candid, of any concepts one wishes to believe, metaphysics, theories of religion—the whole realm of spiritual conceptions. We have an indefinite consciousness of the unknowable, and, apparently, he believes that such consciousness is proof of the existence of the unknowable. Thus, according to Spencer, there is no conflict between science and religion, for science is occupied wholly and exclusively with the knowable, religion with the unknowable.

Spencer is a very plausible expositor of his ideas, able to convince any average reader who is not fortified by the triple-brass of the last word from some other philosopher. He once swept through the minds of the young men, to whom science was the new god, like fire through a salt meadow. These youngsters believed a prophet had arisen in Israel. Even to-day, in cloistered nooks, a surviving Herbert Spencerian may still be found, unconscious that he himself has become an interesting specimen in the

hall of evolution. It is the clarity and the plausibility of Spencer that are so deceptive, but if one reads him with one's eyes open, Spencer becomes as interesting and stimulating a person as the science and philosophy of his century has to offer.

Spencer is an optimist and believes that evolution is making for the greatest happiness of mankind. His philosophy therefore rather ingeniously finds room for science, the utilitarian "greatest good of the greatest number," and disturbs no theological creeds. He is even a mechanist who believes in individualism and ends by reconciling liberalism in politics with his scientific views. He was likewise a most acute theorist in the field of education.

*Life:* J. A. Thomson. English Men of Letters series. 1906.

*An Epitome of the Synthetic Philosophy:* F. H. Collins. 4th ed., 1899

### JOHN STUART MILL (1806-1873)

J. S. Mill, the son of a fanatically utilitarian philosopher, James Mill, completed in his *System of Logic* (1843) the work in the theory of the application of inductive methods to the investigation of scientific problems first suggested by Bacon. In this book Mill made an analysis of inductive proof, and thus showed the methods by which experimental science could check and verify its methods of working. The book, although indebted to Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences*, is a practical successor to it, for it formulates precisely methods of approach for all forms of observation and experiment. Where Whewell is a narrator of the past, Mill breaks new ground by setting out formulas for the future investigator. It matters little if later logicians have been able to show that his five methods of inductive reasoning are reducible at most to two, or that his theory of induction rests upon an assumption that is not susceptible of proof, any more than the assumptions of the older Aristotelian logic, the value of Mill's book is in the fact that his "canons" (*i.e.*, definitions of the experimental method) work in practice. By them, the



chemist, the physicist, or any other specialist may define, guide, and check his experiments.

He was also a writer on political and economic questions and it is in his political essays \*\*\* *On Liberty* that he is best known to the general reader. His doctrine of liberty is a breeze blowing clear and strong from the ancestry of the English-speaking peoples to whom individualism and commonsense coöperation are not incompatible principles but instinctive feelings mutually balanced. "The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection." Our modern democracies have forgotten this sound principle, just as they have forgotten that earlier declaration of the Cromwell rebellion that "resistance to tyranny is obedience to God."

In his theory of economics Mill adhered, probably under the inspiration of his doctrine of liberty, to the principle of laissez-faire—that is to say, to allow economic laws to work themselves out remorselessly to their logical conclusions—a theory that would be sound enough were economics merely a question of abstract law. Such a theory forgets the other factor in liberty—coöperation.

*Autobiography.* 1873-4.

*J. S. Mill, A Criticism:* A. Bain. 1882.

*Modern Humanists Reconsidered:* J. M. Robertson. 1927.

(Carlyle, Ruskin, Emerson, M. Arnold, J. S. Mill, Herbert Spencer.)

## CHARLES DARWIN (1809-1882)

\*\*\* *The Origin of Species* (1859) had probably more effect than any other book since *The New Testament*. It was completely revolutionized the way men thought of and looked at their world on the side of material phenomena, and the theory of evolution which it set forth has proved a key by which vast stores of undreamed of knowledge have been made available for the use of mankind.

There had been evolutionists before Darwin, and the conception of his own theory of evolution was made coincidentally by Alfred Russell Wallace. Although Darwin and Wallace behaved generously in each trying to give the credit to the other, the world has accepted *The Origin of Species* as the official statement of the theory, and associated evolution for all time with Darwin's name.

Where Darwin differed from evolutionists who had preceded him was in finding a hypothesis that would account for evolutionary changes. This hypothesis was "natural selection by means of the survival of the fittest."

His theory was received with a tremendous thunder of disapproval on the part of the lay and clerical world, the echoes and reverberations of which may still be heard rumbling in the valleys. Men shouted aloud that Darwin had said we were all descended from monkeys, which statement is a perversion of his theory. He postulated for man and monkey a remote ancestry in common. Science, on the other hand, surrendered to the irrefutable evidence for Darwin's general principle, although the details of the theory of natural selection have undergone and will continue to undergo, as knowledge increases, considerable modification.

*Life and Letters of Charles Darwin:* F. Darwin. 3 vols. 1887.

*The Origin of Species.* World's Classics series.

\*\*\* *Voyage of the "Beagle."* Everyman's Library.

It was on this voyage that Darwin gathered much of the evidence that led to the formulation of his theory.

\* *The Descent of Man.* 2 vols. 1871.

### JOHN TYNDALL (1820-1893)

Tyndall was the author of the famous classic of physical science, *Heat a Mode of Motion*. He was also, like Huxley, a man who sought to popularize the knowledge of science and delivered many lectures on Physics with this aim in view. His



*Glaciers of the Alps and Mountaineering in 1861* (Everyman's Library) is a readable book.

\* *The Belfast Address*, a lecture delivered in 1874 before a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, is a clearly expressed review of the history of man's search for an explanation of physical and spiritual existence from the evidence of scientific observation.

### THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY (1825-1895)

Huxley was the great champion of Darwin and of the theory of evolution. He devoted time and energy to making people understand the new theory of science, and his explanations are written in clear and simple prose that is a model of lucidity and effective argument. He had also a controversy with Matthew Arnold on the value of science in education, Huxley upholding the cultural importance of science as a substitute for Greek and Latin, Arnold defending vigorously the old humanities. The controversy has raged ever since.

For the layman, Huxley still remains the best medium for the approach to science. The evidence on which the theory of evolution rests is admirably stated in \*\*\* *On a Piece of Chalk*; what the scientific habit of mind is in \*\* *On Improving Natural Knowledge*. The essays that aroused Matthew Arnold are \*\*\* *A Liberal Education and Where to Find It* (1868); \*\*\* *Science and Culture* (1880);<sup>1</sup> \*\*\* *On Science and Art in Relation to Education* (1884).

His \*\*\* *Autobiography* is a brief masterpiece of prose style, and he contributed a \*\* *Life of Hume* to the English Men of Letters series.

*Life and Letters*: L. H. Huxley (his son). 1900.

*Collected Essays*. 9 vols. 1893-4.

*Essays, Selections*. Riverside series.

*Lectures and Lay Sermons*. Everyman's Library.

*Man's Place in Nature and Other Essays*. Everyman's Library.

<sup>1</sup> See Arnold's reply: *Literature and Science*.

**Historians of the Nineteenth Century**

Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit., vol. XIV, chap. II.

[The development of the writing of history in the nineteenth century owed a great deal to the example of Sir Walter Scott, who showed through his novels how possible it was to describe historical facts and events so that these would arouse the imagination and hold the attention of the reader.

Again agitation for, and progress in social reforms, together with the pressing nature of various new social problems created by the growth of industrialism, set men to studying and writing history in the light of economics in order to determine the effects of economic laws upon the structure of society; to deduce from the past, if possible, the answers to present and future. Furthermore, the spread of democracy caused the study of the political and constitutional past. All aspects of history, therefore, were studied scientifically in the endeavour to elucidate the present. The result was that during the nineteenth century there were in England a considerable number of great writers of history and for the first time in the lives of the English-speaking peoples the reading of history became a general habit among a very wide class of people. It is a good habit, which has been somewhat interrupted of late while history passed through a later phase of being a highly technical subject written solely for specialists. There are many signs, however, that history will again be written in increasing amount for the general reader.

The more important historians are listed below, followed by an alphabetical grouping of writers not so important for the general reader. (For Macaulay, see p. 302.)

**Henry Hallam (1777-1859).**

*A View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818), 3 vols. A philosophical study of history from the great migrations to the formation of the chief states of modern Europe.



See especially the section on \* *England in the Middle Ages*. Numerous recent reprints of this work are available.

\*\*\* *Constitutional History of England* (1827). This book is still one of the standard authorities in its field. It carries the subject from the close of the Middle Ages down to the death of George II. This work is published in three volumes in Everyman's Library.

*Introduction to the Literature of Europe during the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1837-9). A reference book of the first rank, but too compressed in statement for general reading. Into this work Hallam poured the garner of a life of study and reading. Many modern editions have been reprinted.

## Edward Augustus Freeman (1823-1892).

\*\*\* *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, 6 vols., 1867-79. This work is still most readable, and for the general reader at least, of unquestioned authority. Freeman's style is simple and lucid, his fact narrative of absorbing interest.

Out of the mass of his other historical writings, the reader will wish to choose his life of \*\*\* *William the Conqueror* (1888) and \*\* *Old English History for Children* (1869). This last is in Everyman's Library, and is a work more likely to be appreciated by the fathers than by the children.

## John Richard Green (1837-1883).

\*\*\* *A Short History of the English People* (1874) has not as yet been succeeded by a more popular or more interesting work in English history. It is the corner stone in one's reading either of English history or of English literature. Green possessed exceptional narrative and descriptive powers which made his book one of the most "human" of the numerous histories of England. It is in Everyman's Library, 2 vols. The illustrated edition, edited by his wife and K. Norgate, 4 vols. 1893-4, is worth owning.

**James Anthony Froude (1818-1894).**

*History of England from the Fall of Wolsey.* This great and deservedly popular history comes to a close with the destruction of the Spanish Armada. It is a voluminous work but nevertheless one that had an amazingly wide appeal. Froude's method of writing history is the reverse of the scientific, for he deliberately and successfully aimed for the general reader. Contemporary documents he summarized, at the same time giving the reader their contents in readable form, although he has been accused of loose statements and incorrect quotation in his summaries. That he was a man of certain violent prejudices does not affect the pleasure with which his history may be read. The history is in Everyman's Library, 10 vols. See also bibliography under Carlyle.

**Goldwin Smith (1823-1910).**

A historian and literary biographer, writer of essays and college professor at Oxford and in America (Cornell and Toronto), is an interesting writer in spite of the fact that what he has to say about history is often coloured by his strong political views. His \* *United States: An Outline of Political History* (1893), new ed. 1899, has been a widely read book. See also biographies under Cowper and Jane Austen.

**Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862).**

*History of Civilization in England, France, Spain, and Scotland*, 3 vols., 1866, suggests in its title the vastness of his plan, which was not completed. Buckle applied the empirical methods of science to history and endeavoured to account for the development of civilization by a consideration of the influence upon it "of physical laws as governing conditions of climate, food, and soil."

Supplementary list of historians. See also, General Bibliographies under each section.

*William Coxe (1747-1828). Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough.* (1818-19).



- James Gairdner (1828-1912). \* *Henry VII.* 1889.
- James Rawson Gardiner (1829-1902). \* *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603-1642*, 10 vols., 1863-1884.
- George Grote (1794-1871). *History of Greece.* 12 vols., 1869-70. \* Abridged ed., 1907.
- Andrew Lang (1844-1912). \* *The Mystery of Mary Stuart.* 1901; \* *Historical Mysteries*, 1904; \*\* *The Maid of France* (Joan of Arc) 1908.
- John Mitchell Kemble (1807-1857). *The Saxons in England.* 2 vols., 1849.
- William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838-1903). *History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism.*
- Sir Alfred Comyns Lyall (1835-1911). *Studies in Literature and History.* 1915.
- Justin McCarthy (1830-1912). *History of Our Own Times, 1837-1905.* 7 vols., 1879-1905; *Modern England.* 2 vols., 1899; *British Political Leaders*, 1903.
- Frederick William Maitland (1850-1906). *History of English Law before the Time of Edward I* (with Sir Frederick Pollock). 2 vols. 1895.
- J. P. Mahaffy: *What the Greeks have done for Modern Civilization.*
- William Nassau Molesworth (1816-1890). *The History of England from 1830 to 1873.*
- Sir Francis Palgrave (1788-1861). *Truth and Fictions of the Middle Ages: The Merchant and the Friar.* (1837).
- Frederick Seebohm (1833-1912). \* *The English Village Community* (1882).
- Sir John Seeley. *The Expansion of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1883).
- William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford (1825-1901). Seventeen lectures on the *Study of Medieval and Modern History* (1886). \* *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development* (1874-8). Treats of the beginnings up to the point at which Hallam's work opens, with the first Tudor monarchy.
- H. A. L. Fisher. *The Republican Tradition in Europe*, 1920. Oxford & N. Y.
- Janet Trevelyan. *History of the Italian People*, 1926.

## Nineteenth Century Politics

- John Bright (1811-1859). *Public Addresses.* Ed. by J. E. T. Rogers. 1874.
- Richard Cobden (1802-1880). *Political Writings.* Ed. by Sir L. Mallet. 1878.
- W. E. Gladstone (1809-1898). *Speeches and Public Addresses.* Ed. by A. W. Hutton and H. T. Cohen. 1892-4.
- T. B. (Lord) Macaulay. *Speeches, Parliamentary and Miscellaneous*, 1853. *Speeches Reform*, 1831-2. 1854. See also p. 302.
- Lord Melbourne (1779-1868). *Lord Melbourne's Papers.* Ed. by L. C. Sanders, 1889.
- See also Political Biographies and General Bibliography for the Nineteenth Century.

### SOME 19TH CENTURY POLITICAL BIOGRAPHIES

- \*\* *Life of Disraeli*: W. E. Monypenny, vols. I and II and G. E. Buckle, vol. III. 1910-1914.  
One of the great biographies of the century.
- \*\*\* *Life of Gladstone*: John Morley.
- Life of Sir Robert Peel*: C. S. Parker. 3 vols., 1891-9.
- \*\* *Life of Richard Cobden*: John (Lord) Morley. 2 vols., 1881.
- Life of Palmerston*: H. L. Bulwer and A. E. M. Ashley. 5 vols. \* *Abridged ed.*, 2 vols., A. E. M. Ashley. 1879. The standard biography.

## 368 What to Read in English Literature

\*\*\* *Life of Queen Victoria*: Sir S. Lee.

\* *Queen Victoria*: Lytton Strachey.

\*\* *Letters of Queen Victoria*: A. C. Benson and Viscount Esher.

\*\* *Eminent Victorians*: Lytton Strachey.

\* *The Greville Memoirs*: 1817-1860: Charles C. F. Greville. Ed. H. Reeve, 3 vols., 1874. Complete edition, 1927.

A journal of the reigns of George IV and William IV.

*Life of George Stephenson*: Samuel Smiles. 1857.

*Life of John Bright*: C. M. Trevelyan. 1913.

*Life and Times of (Lord) Brougham*, (1778-1868), by Himself. 3 vols. 1871.

\* *Viscount Castlereagh*: A. Hassall. 1908.

*Lord Randolph Churchill*: W. S. W. Churchill. 2 vols., 1906.

*The Earl of Derby*: G. Saintsbury. 1892.

\* *Life of W. J. Fox, 1786-1864*: R. and E. Garnett. 1910.

*The Life and Letters of Lord Bryce*: H. A. L. Fisher. 2 vols., 1927.

*Chatham*: John Morley. Ed. of 1897.

### Labor, Social and Industrial Problems

\*\* *The History of Trade Unionism*: Beatrice and Sidney Webb.

\* *The Labour Movement*: L. T. Hobhouse.

*Self-Government in Industry*: G. D. H. Cole.

*Liberalism*: L. T. Hobhouse.

\*\*\* *The Industrial History of Modern England*: G. H. Perris.

*An Introduction to the Industrial and Social History of England*: E. P. Cheyney.

*The Industrial History of England*: H. de B. Gibbins.

### SOCIALISM

\* *Progress and Poverty*: Henry George.

\*\* *Proposed Roads to Freedom*: Bertrand Russell.

\*\* *Socialism and Syndicalism*: Philip Snowden.

\*\*\* *Industrial Democracy; The Decay of Capitalistic Civilization*: Beatrice and Sidney Webb.

*Socialism*: John Spargo.

*Anarchism*: E. V. Zenker.

\* *A Critical Examination of Socialism*: W. H. Mallock.

*The History of the Fabian Society*: E. R. Pease. 1916.

\* *Karl Marx's "Capital"*: A. D. Lindsay. 1927.

*A History of Socialist Thought*: H. W. Laidler. 1927.

*Communism*: H. J. Laski. 1927.

### Journalism, Reviews, and Periodical Magazines in the Nineteenth Century

#### GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also general bibliographies under each section:

*The Beginnings of English Journalism*: J. B. Williams. 1911.

*Making a Newspaper*: J. L. Given. 1913.

*The Press and its Story*: J. D. Symon. 1914.



- J. T. Delane*: Sir E. Cook. 1915. (Delane was the famous editor of *The London Times*.)
- My Memoirs*: H. S. de Blowitz. 1903. (Special correspondent of *The Times*.)
- The Life of Henry Labouchere*: A. L. Thorold. 1913.
- Sir George Newnes, Bart.*: H. Friedrichs. 1911.
- My Father* (W. T. Stead): E. W. Stead. 1913.
- Things Seen*: G. W. Steevens. 1900.
- Lord Northcliffe*: R. M. Wilson. 1927.
- Masters of English Journalism*: T. H. S. Escott. 1911.
- For a brief account of the importance of the literary reviews and the rise of periodical magazines, see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. XII, chap. VI.

## Education

*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, vol. XIV, chap. XIV.

### GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Pioneers of Modern Education, 1600-1700*: J. W. Adamson. 1905.
- The Evolution of Educational Theory*: J. Adams. 1912.
- Oxford and her Colleges*: Goldwin Smith. 1894.
- History of Science Teaching in England*: D. M. Turner. 1927.
- \* *A History of the University of Oxford*: Sir C. Mallett. 3 vols., 1927.
- The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects in England*: F. Watson, 1909.

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